We beg on our knees for someone to save us

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/45124759.

Rating:	Explicit
Archive Warnings:	Rape/Non-Con, Graphic Depictions Of Violence
Category:	M/M
Fandoms:	Hannibal (TV), Hannibal Lecter Series - All Media Types
Relationships:	Will Graham/Hannibal Lecter, Will Graham & Hannibal Lecter
Characters:	Will Graham, Hannibal Lecter, Original Characters, Alana Bloom, Randall Tier
Additional Tags:	Rape/Non-con Elements, Hate Crimes, Gay Will Graham, College Student Will Graham, Psychiatrist Hannibal Lecter, Age Difference, Alternate Universe - Canon Divergence, Hurt/Comfort, Angst, Caring Hannibal Lecter, Hannibal Lecter is a Cannibal, Hannibal Lecter is the Chesapeake Ripper, Alternate Universe - Different First Meeting, Homophobia, Homophobic Language, Hospitals, Eventual Smut, Hannibal wants to be Will's sugar daddy, Mutual Pining, Masturbation, age gap relationships, Older Man/Younger Man, hannibal is a cannibal but it isnt really the focus here, Power Imbalance, Professor Hannibal Lecter, Traumatized Will Graham, Blow Jobs, Oral Sex, Rough Oral Sex, Face-Fucking, Under-negotiated Kink, Hannibal Lecter's Very Active Cowper's Glands, Panic Attacks, Hannibal takes Will shopping, Will fights it every step of the way, Implied/Referenced Child Abuse, Hannibal Lecter is a Softie, for Will only, just a smidge of religious trauma, Sick Will Graham, Will Graham Has Encephalitis, Minor Character Death, Loss of Virginity, Anal Sex, Top Hannibal Lecter, Bottom Will Graham, First Time
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2023-02-17 Updated: 2023-06-25 Words: 41,795 Chapters: 27/?

We beg on our knees for someone to save us

by hannibalsbirthdaycake

Summary

A college-aged Will Graham knocks on Hannibal Lecter's door, seeking assistance after a night out with friends ends in disaster. What choice does Hannibal have other than to let the distressed young man in?

title is from When Humans Become Our Gods by Our Last Night

Hannibal

Chapter Notes

> I am trying something a bit different with this. It's third person limited, but shifts between Hannibal and Will. Each chapter is titled for the person it's following!

Hannibal Lecter sighs to himself in annoyance, "Who is that?"

It’s just after ten o’clock PM, and he has been in bed, unabashedly browsing TattleCrime on his tablet before going to sleep. He likes to see what, if anything, Freddie Lounds has written about him. It’s been quiet over the last few weeks since he has not staged any new tableaus. The person incessantly knocking at his door seems to have no regard for his evening plans, and he muses that perhaps his next victim has delivered themselves right to his doorstep.

It’s at this moment he wishes he’d installed one of those doorbell cameras so he could see who it was and tell them to get out of his doorway without leaving the comfort of his bedroom. But he knows the device would be illogical. It would be watching him, too. And he doesn’t want extra cameras on himself. He values his *privacy* .

Clad in his pajamas, he heads down and opens the front door to reveal the person who’d been knocking. He is a man, but he’s quite young. Likely not more than twenty years old, perhaps closer to eighteen. His face is scrunched in pain, and there are scrapes along his jawline, almost entirely hidden by his stubble.

The man stands at his door, his arms wrapped tightly around his torso. His dark hair is plastered to his forehead with blood and sweat. The boy is also bleeding from his nose. The blood has trickled down his lips and off his chin. His shirt is ripped, revealing reddened handprints around his neck, likely from being choked. His eyes are glazed with shock and his face is drained of color.

The knees of his jeans are ripped, and the fabric has several dark brown stains on it that look like oxidized blood. Dirt stains are concentrated in the front, on either side of the zipper, and along the front pockets. His jeans are loose and hang from his hips, which gives him a boyish look.

The boy hesitantly looks up at Hannibal’s face, his bright blue eyes wide with fear.

“Can I help you?” Hannibal asks after a moment.

“I—they, they took my phone. Can I use yours?” The boy stammers, teeth chattering from the cool Baltimore night.

“Come inside.” Hannibal says, ushering the boy in. “What is your name?”

“Will Graham.” The boy answers after hesitating for just a moment..

Will is clearly exhausted but decides to take a chance on him, following Hannibal inside. He picks up on Will’s turmoil, seeing the boy decide that whatever may happen to him inside Hannibal’s home can’t be any worse than what’s happened outside of it.

“My name is Hannibal Lecter.” Hannibal tells the boy, showing him into the sitting room.

Will sits with a wince on the plush leather couch. He looks down at himself, seemingly to ensure he hasn’t bled on Hannibal’s furniture. It makes him think that the boy isn’t so rude after all. Maybe he’s just not entirely in his right mind. Will seems to have had quite the evening.

Hannibal hands Will his cellphone, a newer iPhone. It doesn’t have a passcode, so Will is able to just swipe up and get to the phone app. Hannibal watches the boy pause, as if he’s trying to decide what number to call. The boy sighs, and hands the phone back to Hannibal.

The action surprises Hannibal. A young, attractive boy like this, and he has no one to call? If he weren’t bloody and dirty, he’d look fairly well put together, as well. He certainly isn’t homeless.

“Don’t you have someone you can call?” Hannibal asks.

“I thought I did… but no. Not anyone I trust, anyway.” Will answers, letting his face fall into his hands.

Hannibal’s eyes narrow. This boy, Will, is reckless with his life. Not only has he come willingly inside a stranger’s home, he has also made it known that there is likely no one missing him. That isn’t even considering the state he’s in. Hannibal could do anything he wants to Will right now and he doubts he could lift little more than a finger to protect himself.

It would be quite simple to subdue him. He could go get his medical bag, as if he’s going to treat Will’s wounds, then inject him with a sedative. The boy would be unconscious before he knew what hit him. Then, he’d be properly secured in the basement for Hannibal to do whatever it is he wants with him, which would of course end with his death. He does like to *play* with his food. Death would not be imminent.

The urge is nothing more than a fleeting thought. Will hasn’t been terribly rude. He hasn’t done anything to sign his own death warrant. Not yet, at least. Hannibal is going to help him.

“Would you like to call an ambulance?” Hannibal asks.

Will shakes his head frantically, squeezing his hands into fists nervously. The anxiety is coming off the boy in *waves* . Hannibal observes Will as his eyes become glassy, either with dissociation or unshed tears. He’s likely imagining what a trip to the hospital would entail, given the obvious nature of his injuries.

“I don’t need an ambulance. I’m alright.” Will finally croaks out.

“Very well. But you don’t look *alright* , as you so insist.” Hannibal tells him.

Will bites his lip, looking up at Hannibal for only the second time that night. He must know how he looks.

“I’m fine, really. I shouldn’t have bothered you.” Will says, standing slowly.

Hannibal is going to argue, but Will’s body seems to do it for him. He stumbles, with a hand on his head and he falls back down onto the sofa. Hannibal moves to grab his medical bag, and sits next to Will on the couch. He doesn’t miss the way the boy flinches away.

“The laceration on your head. You may have a concussion, William.” Hannibal tells him.

“It’s Will, please.”

“Will, then. May I take a look at your head?”

He nods. Hannibal isn’t going to push him to speak, the bruising around his neck likely means talking is painful. He dons some latex gloves and begins to maneuver Will’s curls away from his wound. Getting a better look, it isn’t a deep laceration. He cleans it with an alcohol pad, and is pleasantly surprised that Will doesn’t protest what he’s sure is quite a sting.

Next, he shines his penlight into each of Will’s eyes to test the pupillary response. As he’d suspected, there is a slight difference in each pupil diameter. Will has a mild concussion, and he tells him as much.

“Makes sense. My head is *killing* me.” Will admits.

Hannibal finds himself unsure of what he’s supposed to do with this boy on his couch. No one is coming to get him, and it doesn’t seem as if he has anywhere to go. Hannibal doesn’t like having visitors, especially *unplanned* visitors. But how would it look if he were to just toss the boy out into the street? At the very least, he'd like to keep up appearances.

“Do you have anywhere to stay tonight?” Hannibal asks.

Will pauses before answering, “No.”

The hesitation makes it clear it isn’t the whole truth, and Hannibal wouldn’t believe it if it was. Will is much too put together to not have a home. He notices the logo on the boy’s shirt then, too. It reads ‘John Hopkins University’. He doesn’t assume Will goes there. Maybe he’d gotten the shirt from a thrift store. But he seems like the right age to be in college.

“Are you in school?” Hannibal inquires.

“Yes. John Hopkins.” Will replies, confirming his suspicions.

“Do you not live on campus? They require all first year students to live on campus.”

He’d guessed that Will was a first year student. The boy looks too young to be anything else.

“I do live on campus… but I can’t, I can’t go back there.” Will replies miserably, shaking his head.

“Very well. I cannot in good conscience send you out in the cold with nowhere to go. You may take my guest bedroom for the night.” Hannibal decides. “And I’d like to see to any other injuries you may have.”

Will thanks him, and agrees to the stipulation. Hannibal shows him upstairs, showing him to the bedroom and ensuite bathroom and offering him a change of clothes. Will takes the items graciously, and leaves Hannibal in the bedroom to shower. The boy closes the door behind him, but he does not lock it.

Will

Chapter Summary

TRIGGER WARNING

The flashback in this chapter details what happened. It isn't graphically described, but there is a slur used toward Will. Please proceed with caution.

Will turns the shower on, thankful to be alone. He's, of course, grateful to Hannibal for allowing him inside his home, but what he really needs now is space. He hasn't really gotten a chance to think about what's happened to him. He doesn't want to think of the night, but he knows he can't ignore it. This kind of thing doesn't just go away, as much as he wishes it would.

The evening started out normally enough. His roommate, who he'd felt never liked him much, had invited him out to drink with some boys from his fraternity. Will reluctantly agreed, shocked that the other boy had asked him. He'd wanted to get out of his shell, wanted to make some friends.

They'd driven in his roommate's car to a seedy bar, one that often served alcohol without asking for ID, which none of them had. The group was all under 21. The night continued as he'd expected. The boys seemed nice, like they wanted to get to know Will better. He'd felt out of his element, but they'd done a lot to make him comfortable. Maybe they'd want him to join the fraternity. He knows he never would have. A fraternity definitely isn't the best place for someone like Will to make friends.

He watched from the bar as his roommate began flirting with a woman on the other side of the establishment. The other boys watched, and goaded Will into trying to pick up someone. Will had refused. He doesn't date women. He's gay, but he hasn't told them that. It hadn't seemed important.

"What's the matter, Graham?" A boy Will couldn't recall a name for, asked.

"I'm just not interested in dating." He lied in reply.

His roommate rejoined the conversation after that.

"Nobody said anything about dating! Just hook up with someone. You always seem so uptight."

"I'm fine, really." Will tried.

"What's the matter? Can't get it up for a woman?" His roommate sneered.

“I—I’m not into women.” Will admitted. He hadn’t known what kind of people he was with. He didn’t know that finding out he was gay would make them angry.

“You’re gay?” One boy asked, feigning shock.

“Yes.”

His roommate growls. “The guy I share a room with is a fucking faggot?”

Will opens his mouth to reply, but his roommate shakes his head, turning away from him. He didn’t notice the other bar patrons now looking over at them and overhearing their conversation.

“We’re leaving. Don’t want you in my car.” His roommate said.

He doesn’t argue, only watches the boys go. He doesn’t know how he’s going to get home and finds himself sitting alone at the bar, sipping a glass of water. He’d like a drink, but he can’t afford that.

Eventually, he stood. He’d began wondering how long it would take him to walk back to campus—if he could even find it. He sighed unhappily. He does’t have a smartphone or any money to call a cab.

A few men lingered near him and get closer when he stood to walk out. As if they were surrounding him. They looked at him angrily, with a hungry glint in their eyes.

Will knew then he needed to get out of there, the potential for danger prickling the back of his neck. The three men had formed a circle around him, cornering him against the wall. Surely they weren’t going to attack him inside the bar, right?

He saw an opening and ran for it, dodging the men and heading out the door. He darted to the left of the bar, ducking into an alley to figure out what to do. Logically, he knew he couldn’t go back to campus. Not right now, anyway.

He was pulled from his thoughts by the sound of boots crunching on gravel. The men had found him, blocking him in the alley. He looked frantically between them. There was no way out.

“What do you want?” He asked, lip trembling.

“When you fuck a guy, do you do the fucking or do you get fucked?” One man asked, looking disgusted.

Will’s face flushed at the question. Truthfully, he’d never been with anyone, let alone another boy. He couldn’t answer the question with any certainty, though he’d always imagined himself being fucked when he’d jerked off. He liked the idea of being fucked more than the idea of fucking someone else.

Will doesn't answer the question, his heart beating too hard and loudly for him to focus on anything but the rushing of blood in his ears. He hunched in on himself as they approached,

getting into his space. He hid his face, turning it to the side and looking down. His entire body shook in fear. He thought for sure they were going to kill him when the closest man pulled out a knife.

But the man handed it off to someone else, telling the rest of them, "grab his wrists, hold him in place."

Then, hands are on him. Gripping tightly on his wrists, and scraping them against the rough brick wall. He winced at the pain, but did not protest. He'd reasoned that maybe they'd leave him be if he were quiet. Maybe they'd lose interest.

It escalates from there. There's hands on his belt, yanking his jeans down to his knees. He fought back, trying to free himself of his attackers, but it only worked to get him hit. They shoved his head against the brick, punched him in the face, and even choked him. He'd begged when they choked him, feeling as if he was about to lose consciousness. His pleas had made them laugh.

They ripped his shirt, punched him in the stomach, and tore his boxers down his legs. The garment was in tatters once they were done. They left him bleeding and sobbing on the cold ground outside the bar next to a broken off broom handle covered in his own blood.

"Don't come back. We don't want your kind here." The man had said. It was a threat, the man spitting on Will before walking away. Numbly, he had wondered if it meant they'd do this again or if they'd just kill him next time.

He'd managed to pull himself up after almost an hour on the ground. He'd pulled up his jeans partway, leaving his broken phone and torn boxers on the ground. Not like either would be of any use to him anymore. Bracing himself against the wall, he pulled his jeans up over his ass with a wince. The rough denim does his sore, overstimulated skin no favors.

By this point, he's been in the shower for over twenty minutes. His skin has begun to prune, and the water isn't as hot as it was before. He scrubs his skin harshly, leaving red streaks along his body. Superficially clean, and with all the blood gone, he gets out. Wrapping himself in the overly plush towel, he sighs, allowing himself a brief moment of contentment.

Worrying that Hannibal is still in the bedroom waiting for him, he dries himself off quickly and dresses in his borrowed pajamas. The towel falls to the floor, and Will bends to pick it up, ignoring the protest in his body. He gapes when he sees the towel. He must've not gotten all the blood off himself. The white towel is splotched red with his blood. His stomach sinks at the sight. This man had been kind enough to let Will in, to let him shower, give him clothes to wear, and Will repays him by *ruining* his things?

"Fuck." Will whispers to himself, picking up the towel. He isn't going to hide the mess he's made.

Hannibal

Chapter Notes

> I work full time, I'm going back to school, I decided to start up a second job and have WIPs. So what do I do? Write another fic.

Hannibal sits on the guest bed, waiting patiently for Will to finish up in the shower. The boy has been in there for quite a long time, and he was beginning to wonder if he should check on him. Before he decides, he hears the water shut off, indicating that Will is still among the living.

Hannibal yawns. He is tired, having been in bed when his night was interrupted by the gorgeous boy currently in his guest bath. He'd be lying if he told himself he didn't find the young man attractive. He wonders how he'll look clean, in Hannibal's own clothes.

When Will emerges from the bathroom, Hannibal stares unabashedly. He's clad in Hannibal's own soft cotton T-shirt, the fabric loose on his body. The material is thin, allowing Hannibal to see the muscles of Will's arms and torso. He feels his mouth dry at the sight. The silk pajama pants hang low on his hips, as if they'll fall down if Will moves just the right way. They're loose, but they cling to his damp skin, and Hannibal can see the outline of the boy's cock. He knows it's impolite to be staring like this, but Will's beauty is utterly *captivating* .

Hannibal hadn't given him any underwear. Assuming it would be an odd gesture to a stranger simply sleeping in his guest room for a night. And Will had seemed fine until Hannibal began to stare at him like a piece of meat.

Forcing down the arousal he feels up to his cheeks, Hannibal notices the towel in Will's hand for the first time. There's blood on the stark white fabric.

Will bites his lip, something he seems to do quite a lot, and says, "I'm really sorry. I didn't think I was bleeding. I would offer to buy you a new one but I don't have any money."

"I'm not worried about it. Do you know where you're bleeding from?" Hannibal asks.

"My back, I think?" Will replies, not meeting Hannibal's eyes.

"Let me see?"

Will nods, and sits next to Hannibal on the bed. Hannibal ignores the sharp intake of breath from Will as he lifts the shirt up. There are a myriad of scrapes on his back, as if he's been shoved against a brick wall.

“It’s likely this is where the blood came from. But they’re just scrapes, nothing to be done about them.”

“Okay.” Will says, pulling the shirt down when Hannibal doesn’t do it quickly enough.

“What happened to you?”

“I went out with some guys who I thought were my friends. They weren’t my friends.”

"Did they assault you?” Hannibal asks.

Will shakes his head, though he’s unable to meet Hannibal’s gaze. “It wasn’t the people I went out with.”

“Why don’t you come and lay down on the bed? I’ll have a look at your other injuries.” Hannibal says.

Will hesitates, his body tense, he looks like he wants to say no. He's still afraid. It was then that Hannibal realized for certain that his wounds aren't from just a standard bar fight, but something more sinister. He had been violated, and not just by the scrapes on his back.

“It’s alright, I’m not going to hurt you.” Hannibal said softly.

Will nods, standing up and walking over to the bed. He climbs in, wincing as he moves.

Hannibal moves to the bedside, his hands moving slowly.

"I'm going to touch your neck," Hannibal says quietly.

"Okay." Will responds, shifting on the bed.

Hannibal's hands feel cool against the warm, irritated skin of Will's neck. He prods the area gently, looking for signs of internal injury. Will whines from the touch, in pain, but it seems to only be bruising.

"Did they hurt you here?" Hannibal asks, his knuckles ghosting over Will's abdomen.

He wants to ask who did this. What they looked like, how they sounded, if Will knows their names, but he refrains from asking further questions about it.

"They punched me." He replies.

Hannibal pushes up the fabric, exposing the deep purple bruising forming on Will's stomach. Whoever hit him, hit him *hard* . He presses on the area, a pang of guilt settling in his own gut at causing more discomfort for the boy on his bed.

"Why did these men attack you?"

"Because they're bigoted assholes?" Will replies.

"Why do you say that?"

Hannibal is inclined to believe Will did not instigate whatever occurred, so perhaps these men were just *bigoted assholes* , as Will says. There is a distinct lack of defensive wounds on the boy. It looks like he just took whatever they gave him.

"They overheard me say I was gay." Will finally admits.

Hannibal already knows the answer to his next question, but he asks anyway. Just to be sure.

"Did they sexually assault you?"

"I guess... yeah. Not with their... their *dicks* . He used a broken off broom handle."

"They sodomized you. Are you bleeding?" Hannibal asks. The method they chose has a high risk of internal injury, more so than more *traditional* methods.

"No." Will says. Hannibal doesn't believe him, but he can't force the truth out of the boy.

Hannibal leaves Will to rest after that, deciding he's prodded the boy enough. He picks up the boy's tattered clothes. The jeans are salvageable, the shirt is not and there are no boxers in the pile he left. There's blood in the crotch of his jeans, so he knows Will lied. But maybe the boy isn't aware of it. He's willing to give him the benefit of the doubt... for now. He won't tolerate continued lies, even from someone as breathtaking as Will Graham.

Hannibal considers locking the bedroom door, locking Will inside like a prisoner. Truthfully, he hasn't decided whether or not he wants to let the boy go. He's also not sure if he wants to kill him, though he finds himself wondering what the boy would taste like. Perhaps he could keep him, keep him alive, and only take a few pieces off of him. Then, when he begins to lose his novelty, Hannibal could kill him. The idea doesn't spark excitement inside him like he'd expected it would.

He finally goes to bed, getting a meager three hours of sleep. His ears remained ever vigilant of noise inside the house, but aside from a few cries out from Will's room, all is quiet. *Did the boy always have nightmares, or is this something new?*

He showers quickly, then lets his secretary know to cancel his appointments for the day and goes downstairs to start breakfast. He hears Will before he sees him, the boy's bare feet padding quietly against the hardwood floor of the hallway. He turns, greeting him with a smile.

"Would you like some coffee?" Hannibal asks.

"Sure, thank you." Will responds, trying to match Hannibal's smile.

Hannibal watches him get comfortable at the counter as he pours Will's coffee into a mug. He places it in front of the boy who immediately wraps his hands around the warmth. He doesn't move to drink it right away like Hannibal thought he would have. The boy looks exhausted. There are dark bags under his eyes, and swelling. His eyes are bloodshot, as if he'd been crying. If he was, he was quiet about it. Hannibal hadn't heard anything other than a few screams from what he assumed were nightmares.

"Do you take your coffee with sugar? Or milk?" He asks.

The question seems to startle Will. He looks up with wide blue eyes, pausing before answering, "I'm not sure. I've never tried coffee."

Hannibal quirks his brow. He'd assumed it was a prerequisite to being a college student.

"What do you drink to stay awake for all nighters?" Hannibal asks, trying to make conversation.

"Energy drinks, mostly." Will replies.

"Those can wreak havoc on your liver, Will."

"I'm aware of the potential health risks, *dad* ." Will jests, immediately covering his hand with his mouth.

Hannibal chuckles, though the part of him that finds Will nearly irresistible frowns at being seen like a *dad* .

"I'm sorry. That was rude of me. We're strangers." Will says apologetically.

"It's quite alright. I am a doctor, so oftentimes I cannot help myself from saying things like that unwarranted."

Will takes a sip of his coffee, and his face scrunches in displeasure.

"Tastes bitter," He says, sticking out his tongue slightly.

"It can be an acquired taste. Try adding some milk and sugar." Hannibal says.

Will adds a lot. By the time he's done, there's more milk and sugar than coffee, but he drinks it then.

"Much better." He says.

They eat breakfast, a paltry affair compared to what Hannibal would have liked to cook for Will. But he was caught off guard and had no time to prepare an extravagant meal, so he'd settled on a simple protein scramble. Will did not seem disappointed, in fact, he seemed ecstatic. He ate quickly, and told Hannibal with a full mouth that his cooking was *delicious* . Rudeness of speaking with his mouth full aside, Hannibal feels himself swell with pride.

Will

Will feels as if he's overstayed his welcome here. He needs to get back to campus, but he doesn't know where to go. He can't stay in his dorm. What if his roommate was the one that orchestrated the attack? Did he know those men would assault and rape him?

“Thank you for everything, but I need to get back to campus.” Will tells Hannibal.

“Is it safe for you to be there?” Hannibal asks.

“I don’t know. But I can’t afford to miss class.” Will admits truthfully. The thought of lying to Hannibal hadn’t even crossed his mind.

This stranger has been unusually kind to him. When he stumbled upon his door last night, he hadn't been expecting to be met with what seems to be genuine concern. Really, he hadn't known what to expect. His body was acting of its own accord, moving him away from the scene of the crime. And now, he needs to go back to his dorm. It isn't the scene of the crime, but it's close enough. The thought churns in his stomach.

Hannibal's face furrows with concern, his eyebrows coming together as he considers the boy.

"I could take you back, if you'd like." He offers finally.

Will stares at him in disbelief. Is he serious? He's already been more than kind enough to Will.

Will can see that Hannibal notices his hesitation, and likely takes it as a sign of distrust.

"If you don't feel comfortable with me, I understand," He says.

Will hesitates for a second more before responding. "No, it's not that. I'd really appreciate the ride."

Hannibal smiles, relieved on his face.

"Let's get going then," Hannibal says, gesturing to the door.

Will follows him out, feeling oddly protected by his presence. He slips into the passenger side of Hannibal's car, and sits there in silence as Hannibal drives.

When they arrive, Hannibal parks the car and turns to Will.

"Are you sure you're alright, Will?" He asks, his voice gruff and concerned.

Will nods, not trusting himself to speak but he realizes he has to. He's still wearing Hannibal's clothes, given the state his were in last night. He realizes he didn't even bring his jeans back. Maybe they weren't salvageable.

"If you wait a minute, I'll go upstairs and change, then bring your clothes back out to you."

"Nonsense, you can keep them." Hannibal replies.

Will flushes, wanting to argue, but these are the nicest pajamas he's ever worn. He likes the idea of keeping them. The fabric is smooth and soft on his skin. Not irritating like the cheap flannel ones he has.

"Oh... thank you." He says shyly.

"If you need anything, please give me a call."

"I don't... I don't have a phone. But thank you, again." Will replies, miserably.

Hannibal's face crinkles with concern, and he looks as if he is about to say something more.

"Do you have time for breakfast or lunch this week? We could get together and talk, if you'd like." He asks finally.

Will blinks in surprise, unsure if he heard him correctly. Was this man asking him out? He quickly pushes the thought away, telling himself it was silly and absurd. But still, a part of him felt a strange warmth building inside of him at the thought that someone actually wanted to spend time with him.

He considers it for a few moments before nodding in agreement. He smiles warmly up at the older man.

"I'd like that."

It had been decided. Hannibal would be in this spot at 8 AM tomorrow morning and they would go out for breakfast together. Will watches as Hannibal drives off, dumbfounded by what had occurred in less than 24-hours. Truthfully, he hasn't really thought of whether or not he likes Hannibal, having been dealing with more pressing matters. But the older man is attractive. He's also twice Will's age, he guesses. He hadn't asked how old his good samaritan was.

He's relieved to see the dorm empty. His roommate must be in class, or maybe he's moved out--most of his things are gone. He should be in class, too. But he supposes being assaulted is as good a reason as any to miss a day of class. He'll go to his afternoon classes tomorrow. For the time being, he sits at his desk and pulls out his old MacBook. The machine is almost 10 years old now, but it's retained most of its functionality, aside from some sticky keys and some lag.

He pulls up a google search bar, typing in 'Hannibal Lecter'. He's curious to know more about the man.

He's surprised to find that not only is Hannibal a psychiatrist, he teaches at John Hopkins occasionally. Given Will's program of study, Behavioral Biology, it's likely he would have had him as a professor at some point. He ignores the way that makes his heart flutter. He'd never considered himself someone who would have a crush on a professor, but he's pretty

sure that's what's happening now. Does it count if he met Hannibal outside of the university, though?

He shakes his head. That line of thought is absurd. He really has more important things to consider. He doesn't think there are any lasting effects of his assault, only bodily injuries that need time to heal. They hadn't actually fucked him, so he doesn't think he needs to be tested for STDs, either.

On Hannibal's faculty profile, it says he was a trauma surgeon. Will could ask him, but his face heats in shame at the thought. He'd prefer to keep his stupid questions to himself. He tries to assure himself that he's fine. He is in pain, though. His ass aches. He knows he's bleeding, having seen it in the shower, and on the clothes he'd borrowed from Hannibal. The stain makes him glad he hadn't been asked to give them back.

He waves the worry away even though he's alone in the room. It's probably just some superficial tearing, nothing that won't heal in a few days' time. The traumatic aspect of the incident hasn't really seemed to hit him yet. He doesn't feel like he's on the verge of shattering into a thousand pieces. He feels mostly normal. He must still be in shock, he thinks.

Still alone in his dorm room, Will undresses to catalog his injuries. He looks down at himself and takes in a sharp breath. His borrowed pajama pants are stained with blood and there's more dried blood on his thighs and buttocks.

He moves closer to the mirror and takes a good look at himself. There are red welts across his backside, likely where one of them had slapped him, though he doesn't immediately recall being slapped. His anal area is red and swollen, puckered from what was a forceful penetration with any kind of prep or lubrication. Tears trail down his face as he stares at himself in the mirror--tears of anger and humiliation.

He dresses in his own clothes and runs a hand through his hair before collapsing into bed, exhausted from all the emotions that had come up throughout the day. He's grateful for Hannibal's kindness and hopes tomorrow will bring some clarity about how he's feeling about everything that happened yesterday. He worries more about how he's going to feel whenever the shock finally wears off. With nothing to do but wait, he lets sleep claim him.

Hannibal

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The next day, Hannibal arrives outside Will's dorm at 8 AM, sharp, but Will isn't there waiting for him. Concerned, he goes up to the dorm in search of him. He knocks softly on the door and is relieved when he hears shuffling coming from inside. The door opens a crack and he sees an exhausted looking Will standing in the doorway.

Hannibal had anticipated that Will might be upset or scared, but he hadn't expected this level of anguish etched across his face. He looks away, not wanting to pry into whatever it is that has weighed down Will's spirit so heavily overnight.

Will steps aside to let Hannibal in and Hannibal takes note of the obvious pain that even slight movements seem to cause him. He resists the urge to wrap his arms around Will and offer comfort; instead he looks at him with concern and asks if he's okay.

Will gives a short nod before turning away from Hannibal and gesturing towards a chair in the corner of the room. Hannibal doesn't miss the way Will seems worse than he had the previous day, and guesses Will's nod is instinctual more than anything. He's clutching his arms against his torso and shivering almost violently. It's the kind of shivering that's so exhausting it makes the muscles in the back ache with tension.

Hannibal stands, approaching Will with the intent of placing his palm on his forehead. His movement seems to have startled Will, causing the boy to flinch backwards and hit his head on the wall.

"My apologies, I was just going to check for fever." Hannibal explains.

"'s fine," Will says through chattering teeth.

Hannibal moves closer once more, and places his hand on Will's forehead with an immediate frown.

"Will, you're burning up."

"No, no, I'm fine." Will replies, arguing uselessly.

"It seems that you may have an infection, Will. That can be quite serious. We should go to the hospital."

Will shakes his head stubbornly, seeming determined not to move. "No, I don't need the hospital," he insists.

Hannibal sighs. He knows Will's reluctance to go to the hospital stems from his own fear, but he can't allow Will to suffer a potentially serious infection just to avoid an uncomfortable situation.

"You need to go to the hospital, Will. It's for your own good. I promise I won't leave your side."

He watches as the boy works it out in his head. Deciding whether or not to concede or to continue arguing with Hannibal. Either way, he's going to the hospital. Hannibal decides he will drag the boy there himself if he doesn't go willingly. He doesn't want Will to die before he gets the chance to explore his newfound infatuation with him. Even though his reasoning is selfish, he still doesn't wish to see Will in pain. It makes his chest ache in a foreign way.

Will clenches his teeth, shifting his weight from one foot to the other. It's clear that he's trying to hide the discomfort he's in, but he's failing. Finally, through shuddering breaths, he agrees to go to the hospital.

"I'll get your coat." Hannibal says, procuring the item from its place on the door.

He helps Will into the sleeves, the boy's jerky movements making the task difficult. Hannibal can feel the heat come off him in waves. Without a thermometer it's hard to say what the boy's temperature is at, but he knows it can't be good. The sooner they arrive at the hospital, the better.

Finally inside the car, Hannibal begins the short drive to the hospital. He glances over at his passenger periodically, only to see the boy passed out, and his head resting against the cool glass of the window. Baltimore traffic is oblivious to their needs, and the drive that should have taken 10 minutes, takes 20.

Parking near the emergency entrance, Hannibal starts to help Will out of the car, but Will waves him away, insisting he can do it himself. He stumbles out of the car, still feverish, but determined to make it to the hospital on his own. It's a short walk, and Hannibal can see the hospital doors are within sight. He keeps his distance, allowing Will to pretend he's strong enough to make it alone, until they reach the doors.

Hannibal reaches out, offering his arm to steady Will before they enter the hospital. Will takes it hesitantly, grateful for the support. They make their way towards the front desk, and Hannibal smiles and nods at the receptionist before leading Will to the nearest chair.

He calls for a doctor and soon a triage nurse appears. She's young, with a kind face and a professional demeanor. She immediately takes charge of the situation, asking Will questions and assessing his condition.

After a few minutes, the nurse brings a wheelchair for Will. She's concerned that the boy is too ill to walk, and Hannibal can't help but agree. He watches as Will is wheeled away, feeling helpless to the situation, having been told he can't come back with Will, as they are not related. He sits nervously, awaiting news on Will's condition.

Sometime later, a different nurse approaches him, her face drawn in irritation.

"The boy, Will, is inconsolable. He's asking for you." She tells him, the irritation in her voice matching that of her face.

The nurse's attitude leaves Hannibal itching to put her into one of his dishes, but he tampers down the desire for Will's sake. For now. He asks for her name and files it away for later.

Hannibal follows, prepared to walk into quite a scene, if the nurse's words ring true. He expects Will to truly be inconsolable, though he hadn't thought the boy would lose his composure in such a way.

To his surprise, Will is quiet, on the exam table and still clothed. His eyes are wide, and it's clear he's panicking. But Hannibal wouldn't describe the boy as inconsolable, only nervous.

" *Hannibal* ," Will whispers.

His hands twitch, as if he wants to reach out for him, but the boy stays seated.

"What's the problem here?" Hannibal asks, first looking at Will, then to the nurses in the room.

"They want to perform an exam. I don't want them to perform the exam." Will replies plainly, as if it's the simplest thing in the world.

"It's necessary, given the nature of his injuries." The nurse says.

"She's right, Will." Hannibal agrees. But he'd be lying if he said the exam isn't that bad. That it isn't traumatic in and of itself. Many people refuse them because of it.

Hannibal watches as the boy steels himself, a figurative mask falling over his face. The panic that was evident only moments ago is now replaced with a vacant gaze. His face is neutral, and his body goes lax. Will nods, signaling his consent to the exam. The nurses put out a gown for him then step out of the room. Hannibal turns to follow.

"Wait. Stay?" Will asks, his voice giving away his anxiety.

Hannibal looks back at him, his heart aching for the boy. He gives a gentle nod and stays, remaining close by in case Will needs emotional support during the exam.

The doctor arrives shortly after with a nurse and they begin to preform the exam. Will remains calm throughout, though his grip on Hannibal's hand never wavers. The doctors make notes and ask questions, following protocol as they assess Will's condition.

When they are finished, they report their findings to both Hannibal and Will and leave them alone again. The mask that had been so securely placed over Will's expression is gone now, the boy on the verge of tears once more. He turns to Hannibal, who takes him into his arms without hesitation. Will finally gives in to what he wants, and goes lax in Hannibal's hold with a sigh.

"It'll be alright," he whispers into Will's curls, holding him close for what feels like hours before finally allowing him to pull away with a shaky breath.

They admit Will and start him on IV antibiotics for the infection, leaving the pair alone in a room to wait. Will should begin feeling better within hours and then they can discuss

discharging him. Once the infection is cleared, the real healing has to be done. The damage to Will's psyche is likely much worse than anything they've done to his body.

Chapter End Notes

I have this written through chapter 8

Will

The nurses had told him there were *splinters* inside him that the doctor needed to remove. And it had been *painful* . Will numbly wonders if it would have been easier if he'd sought medical care right after it had happened. It helped to have Hannibal there, even though they barely know one another. The man was and still is a comforting presence. And also old enough to be Will's *father*-- probably . Will realizes he's never asked how old Hannibal is.

He knows he finds Hannibal attractive. Knows that he's wondered what's underneath the man's fancy clothing. Part of the appeal is certainly the silvery streaks in the man's blonde hair, and the lines gracing his face. Will has always liked older men, often finding himself gravitating toward people twice his age. He can't recall the last time he'd even spared a glance at someone his own age.

Any therapist would probably ask him about his relationship with his father. And it would be a topic of little substance. He barely knows his father. Sure, he grew up with him around. Lived in the same household until he turned eighteen, but that's where their relationship ended.

His father was always emotionally closed off, finding solace in the bottom of a bottle instead of in being a parent. When Will was younger, he liked to imagine his father being a different man. He probably was before Will's mother died. But as Will aged, he realized there was no point in wishing for things to be different. He learned to ignore the ache in his chest, the longing for a real relationship with his dad. Maybe now he's looking for that in other people, looking for a surrogate father, who for some reason, Will seems to be wildly attracted to.

He can't consider his attraction to Hannibal any more than an abstract concept. He can't imagine any kind of intimacy between them. Anything more than a hug makes his stomach lurch and a suffocating lump to form in his throat. He's quite certain he'll never want to be touched by a man again. The idea that the rest of his life could be entirely celibate leaves him more despondent than he'd anticipated.

Lying in his hospital room as Hannibal leaves to get coffee, Will wonders if he should cut ties with the older man. If Hannibal does like him, and finds him attractive, Will might never be able to give him what he wants. It could set them both up for a relationship filled with pain and resentment. Will doesn't want to do that to Hannibal, or himself.

He's probably getting ahead of himself, he thinks. Hannibal might not like him like *that* . He might have simply taken pity on Will, and just wants to help him. And even if he does like Will, why would he want him now? He's dirty. Used up. *Traumatized* . He'd be a burden more than anything else. He wonders if Hannibal would have even given him the time of day had he bumped into him at the supermarket instead of showing up bleeding at his door in the middle of the night.

He would have. Because Hannibal is *nice* . He's kind. He would have spoken to Will, but it wouldn't have gone any further, he's sure. Nobody could want someone like him. He wasn't

all that interesting before he was assaulted, and now he has *baggage* . Real, heavy baggage. The kind of thing that isn't going to go away in a few days. He'll remember this for the rest of his life. And it'll paint the way he sees the rest of the world.

The realization hits him then. This really isn't something that'll just go away in time, if it ever goes away at all. He isn't particularly resilient, given his childhood. He was never outright abused, of course. But an emotionally neglectful parent is often just as bad. He doesn't have a support system to help him through this. He can't afford therapy, and he doesn't even want to think about the bill he's going to get for this hospital stay.

The world around him continues spinning even as he feels as if he's stopped. What if he misses too many classes and loses his scholarship? He'll have nothing. He'll be homeless unless he runs back to Louisiana with his tail between his legs. He'd have to beg his father to let him come home. And even then, his dad might say no. He hadn't wanted Will to leave in the first place. And he hasn't called since Will left. Of course, if he'd called in the last few days, Will wouldn't have known. His phone is broken. Another thing to put atop the growing pile of obstacles in Will's way.

Hannibal returns, pulling Will from his thoughts. He takes the proffered cup of coffee and sips slowly. He doesn't want to accidentally share any of things he'd just been thinking of. Even if he decides to cut ties with Hannibal, he isn't going to do it here. Maybe he's selfish, but he doesn't want to be in the hospital alone.

"I can see the gears turning in your mind." Hannibal observes.

"I'm just thinking about what I'm supposed to do after this." Will says, confident in the fact it isn't a lie. It just *omits* some truth.

"You should focus on healing your physical injuries, and then *we* can figure out where to go next." Hannibal suggests.

Will doesn't miss the 'we' in his statement. He must want to be involved with Will's recovery, *right* ?

"You don't have to stick around, you know." Will says quietly, immediately regretting it. He really hadn't wanted to give the man an out. Not this soon, anyway. He doesn't want to be alone.

He isn't sure he even wants to deal with this alone. He wonders if it would even be worth it to stay alive when the life he has is filled with so much pain. He knows it isn't healthy, but Hannibal is rapidly becoming a bright spot in an otherwise dull existence.

"I would like to stick around, if you'll have me."

Hannibal moves closer to Will then, taking his hand in his larger one. Will likes the contact, relishes in it. There's nothing stressful about hand holding. It doesn't have to be a precursor to anything more intimate. At least, it doesn't feel that way. Hannibal is holding his hand almost like a concerned parent would, and the thought makes Will's stomach flip. He still isn't sure *what* Hannibal is to him. His attraction to the man is undeniable, but he also has this way

about him that makes Will feel safe, cared for. It's what he imagines being comforted by a parent would feel like.

"Okay." Will replies, offering a small smile. The semantics of their relationship don't need to be figured out right this instant.

The nurse comes in then, and puts something in Will's IV.

"What's that?" Will asks.

"Something to help you rest." She tells him.

Will's heart starts pounding as the chemically induced exhaustion takes over his body. He desperately wants to stay conscious, to keep an eye on his surroundings, but it feels like a losing battle. He's already feeling the pull of sleep, and all he can do is hope that, when it takes him, he won't be vulnerable to something terrible while he's unconscious. As he drifts away, his last thoughts are filled with worry rather than rest.

Hannibal

The distress radiating off the boy as he fights the sedative is obvious, but he loses out in the end and sleep takes him. Hannibal sits, considering the unethical treatment. The staff hadn't asked Will if he wanted anything. They had just given it to him. The situation leaves a sour taste in Hannibal's mouth. He finds himself almost *angry* , his lip curling in a minute snarl. He doesn't get angry, not like this. And not over some kid he barely knows.

The feeling is foreign, but feels too close to a loss of control. He stifles his bloodlust, and decides he'll just file a complaint with the licensing board against the nurse who violated Will's consent. Coincidentally, it's the same nurse who'd been rude to him earlier. An unethical nurse with a poor bedside manner, how has she stayed employed this long? There must be other complaints against her.

His thoughts drift back to Will. Sleeping soundly, surrounded by hospital equipment. He knows the boy could have *died* had he not asked him out for coffee. And it would have felt like he was partly responsible. He *knew* Will was injured more severely than he was letting on. And he still let him leave anyway. Despite telling himself Will is an adult and capable of making his own decisions, he still feels as if it was himself who let it get this bad. That he could have prevented this.

The feeling of obligation stems from somewhere. Likely his sister, Mischa. She was his charge and he'd failed her all those years ago. Seeing this boy, distressed and injured, on his doorstep awakened something long dormant inside him. He cares for Will, wants to protect him. He doesn't intend to fail again.

Hannibal watches Will, who is now deep in sleep, for what feels like hours. He studies the rise and fall of his chest, the way his face relaxes in sleep. It's almost calming to watch him rest peacefully. Finally, there is a shift in Will's breathing and he slowly begins to wake. His eyes flutter open and take in his surroundings before they settle on Hannibal sitting next to him.

"Hannibal?" Will asks groggily as he opens his eyes all the way to find Hannibal looking back at him with an expression of concern. Will takes a deep breath and tries to sit up but winces at the pain that comes with it.

"You're still here," He says quietly, surprise etched into his features.

"I wasn't going to leave you alone." Hannibal replies. He'd cancelled all of his appointments for the day as soon as they'd arrived at the hospital.

Several hours pass, with Will falling into and out of sleep. The boy tries to keep his eyes open, but they always droop, then close. He rests more fitfully now that most of the sedative is out of his system, a series of groans and utterances falling from his lips as he rests. Hannibal can only guess what nightmares plague the boy.

By late afternoon, Will is awake and seems to feel better. When more nurses come into the room, he visibly tenses, leaving Hannibal to wonder if it's a new thing for him, or if he's dealt with these feelings before his assault. Will watches with wide eyes as a nurse prepares a syringe of medication. He sits up more, shaking his head no.

"I don't want to be drugged." He says, voice wavering.

The fear in the boy's voice is evident, and Hannibal feels the urge to protect him from the threat, even if the threat isn't really a threat at all.

"What are you giving him?" Hannibal questions.

"Lorazepam. Just to help with his anxiety. We need to check his injuries." The nurse explains.

"No!" Will cries out, moving to try and get out of the hospital bed.

Hannibal moves to try and stop him, but the boy is too fast. He manages to stumble out of bed before anyone can reach him, pushing past them as he makes a beeline for the door. Hannibal follows close behind, his mind quickly running through a list of scenarios in case Will decides to run.

The nurses manage to catch up with Will and grab his arms before he can make it any further. He struggles against them, trying desperately to get away as tears spill down his cheeks. Hannibal moves closer, trying to soothe him with calming words while gently pushing one nurse aside so that he can take hold of Will's hand. The grip is firm yet gentle and eventually Will begins to calm down somewhat, though he still trembles in fear.

"Will, it's alright. They just need to make sure you're okay." Hannibal offers, trying to calm the boy down.

"I don't need to be drugged for that." Will argues.

"Are you sure? It would definitely make it easier." Hannibal responds.

"Yes. I'm *fine* ." Will assures him.

Hannibal looks to the nurses, who only shrug. Will is in his right mind. If he doesn't want the drug, he doesn't have to have it. His consent has already been violated today. Hannibal doesn't want to see it happen again.

When the nurse asks Will to lay on his side, Hannibal sees a flash of regret over his face. The first time he was examined like this, he hadn't known what to expect. Now he does and the anxiety radiating off him is nearly suffocating.

Hannibal stays inside the room, knowing that's where the boy wants him. He allows him to take his hand, gripping it tightly as the nurses push up the gown he's wearing. The boy flinches at the sound of the nurse changing her gloves. The exam is fast, the nurse moving as quickly as possible.

"Everything feels alright. I'll need to run it by the doctor, but he should be okay to go home tonight." The nurse says, looking at Hannibal.

The medical staff had begun to treat him as if he were Will's guardian once the boy had asked for him. He wants to explain that no, he isn't Will's parent, but the words don't come. It's not as if it would matter here, anyway.

The doctor enters the room a few minutes later, carrying a bottle of antibiotics and discharge papers. Will takes them and signs them, not taking any time to actually read them. Nobody does.

"Will he be staying with you?" The doctor asks, looking at Hannibal.

At first, he doesn't answer. He doesn't want to assume Will is staying with him. But the doctor continues, clearly reading the hesitancy on Hannibal's face.

"He needs to be with someone. At least for a couple of days. He does have a mild concussion as well, so he needs to rest."

"I'll stay with Hannibal." Will finally confirms. "If he'll have me."

"Of course, Will." Hannibal replies.

With that settled, the nurses help Will into his clothes and then guide him to Hannibal's car. Hannibal follows, carrying his bag and a few supplies for the night. Once in his car, he turns to Will who looks utterly exhausted. He reaches across the seat, taking the boy's hand in his own before starting the engine. As they drive away from the hospital, Hannibal can feel Will's grip on his hand tighten while they make their way back to Hannibal's house where he can rest for the night.

Will

Chapter Notes

> I have this written through chapter 11 but I'm coming off Zoloft after being on it for a decade and I'm feeling some type of way so I keep forgetting to update D:

He's pinned against the jagged brick wall, feeling the sharp edges dig painfully into his face. Cruel sneers and mocking laughter fill the air as he struggles to free himself, but it's no use. His pants are yanked down around his ankles and a wave of shame washes over him. He can barely control his body as sharp knives of pain shred through every nerve ending.

Will awakens, a broken scream lodged in his throat and the phantom scent of stale beer in his nose. His body is damp with sweat and his heart is racing so fast it feels like it may burst. He throws the blanket off his overheated body and breathes heavily, taking stock of himself. He's in Hannibal's house, he's fine. *It was just a dream.* He struggles to calm the tremors wracking his body regardless.

"Will?" Comes a call outside the bedroom door.

"Yeah?" He answers.

Hannibal takes it as a green light to enter. Worry is etched into his features, leaving Will with the distinct feeling he's causing the man to age prematurely. His mind is still too muddled to feel guilty about any of it, his body still reeling from the nightmare. He's had nightmares before, has had them all his life. But most of the time the things his brain conjures up are entirely fictional. He's never been worried about *reliving* a trauma as he sleeps.

He doesn't think he's had any *real* trauma before this. Aside from growing up with his emotionally distant father, he wasn't ever subjected to any real abuse. Nothing that would continue to haunt his dreams, not like this. The thought fills him with anger. He's been too caught up in the aftermath to get angry, but he's feeling it now like a bucket of ice water has been dumped over him. He wants to hit something, to scream, to do *something* . And instead, he sits on the bed, in this virtual stranger's house and allows himself to be comforted.

At least, that's what he thinks Hannibal is trying to do. The older man has seated himself next to Will and placed a tentative hand on his shoulder. He resists the urge to flinch away. He knows he's not in any danger right now. He trusts Hannibal, despite how naïve that makes him. He'd trusted his roommate too. And the patrons at the bar. He never expected to be made a *victim* by them all.

Feeling the tears form in his eyes, he hates himself for it. He's not sad, he's not broken. He's *angry* . His body trembles with the intense emotion, like it's freezing him from the inside out.

Lifting his chin up and looking at Hannibal once more, his resolve falters when he sees the man's face drawn in what appears to be genuine concern. Perhaps he'd misread Will's reactions as panic or sadness. That perhaps he was trembling in fear, when that couldn't be further from the truth. He feels the urge to assure Hannibal that he's fine, but the words stay lodged in his throat, unable to pass the lump that's formed there.

His body's unwillingness to spit the words out make him realize that he's lying to himself. Being angry and afraid are not mutually exclusive experiences. He can be both. He *is* both.

He shouldn't be afraid. He knows that. But his body doesn't. It's been in a state of perpetual fight or flight since the night at the bar. It opens up his mind to the paranoia that threatens to consume him. Hannibal is larger and stronger than he is. This man could do anything he wants to Will, and he'd deserve it.

He's made himself at home in Hannibal's house. He's worn his clothes, eaten his food, allowed the man to care for him in ways he hasn't been cared for ever in his life. The idea chokes him, and the tears spilling over onto his cheeks are ones of despair.

Knowing what people are capable of and trusting them anyway is a foolish thing to do. Yet, despite this, Hannibal's hand on his shoulder causes a warmth to spread through him and makes him want to lean into the touch. He's so desperate for the closeness that he would likely pull Hannibal into an embrace, even if he had a knife to his neck.

He presses into the older man, practically crawling into his lap. To his surprise, Hannibal allows it. He lets Will lay his head on his thighs and starts to gently card through Will's curls. His nightmare and the phantom scent of stale beer forgotten, he falls asleep again.

When he wakes, he's acutely aware that his position has changed. He and Hannibal are lying in his bed, and the older man's arms are wrapped securely around him, spooning him. He wriggles experimentally in the hold, finding he can't free himself. He'll have to wake Hannibal up.

And... *oh* . In his wriggling he feels Hannibal's erection against his ass. The older man is obviously asleep and entirely unaware of their predicament. Will's face flushes a beet red, but he lacks the revulsion he thought he'd feel at the situation.

Reasoning with himself, he knows it's a natural response, and most of the time, he wakes with a hard on too. In fact, he has one now, but at least his isn't *pressing up against anyone.*

He's content to lie like that for a while, but eventually the pressing need to relieve his bladder wins out.

"Hannibal," He whispers, to no avail.

Again he tries, " *Hannibal!* "

At that, the older man stirs. He freezes for a moment, seeming to realize their position just as Will had when he'd awoken.

"Let me up." Will demands.

"Right, of course." Hannibal replies, voice rough with sleep.

Freed from the hold, Will gets up, thankful to be relieving the annoying pressure in his abdomen. Had he not had to *go* so badly, he would have found it difficult. He's often painfully bladder shy, leaving him to struggle to relieve himself if he knows someone is just outside the door waiting on him.

Flushing the toilet and washing his hands, he emerges from the bathroom to see Hannibal sitting up in bed. Last night, he hadn't really gotten the chance to appreciate the man's appearance. His blonde, silvery gray hair looks so soft when it's mussed up from sleep and devoid of product. The thin, V-neck t-shirt covering his torso leaves little to the imagination, and Will stares longer than he means to. He can see the tuft of graying chest hair peeking out from the collar and his nipples, hard underneath the sheer fabric.

He swallows thickly, suddenly aware of the dryness in his mouth. He feels the stirrings of arousal low in his abdomen, and knows the thin pajama pants he's wearing would do little to hide an inconvenient erection.

The mortification he feels at the idea of having Hannibal seeing that does its job of quelling his arousal. It could disgust Hannibal so much that he kicks Will out and tells him he never wants to see him again. The notion sits heavy in Will's chest.

"Breakfast?" Hannibal asks, yanking Will from his spiraling thoughts. "You need to take your medication."

"Right. Yes, please." Will answers around the lump in his throat.

Hannibal

As pleasant as the little bubble he and Will have existed in for the past couple of days is, it's time for Will to go back to campus. The overwhelming desire to *keep* the boy, to *possess* him entirely is difficult to ignore, but Hannibal does.

"Are you ready?" Hannibal asks Will while answering for himself in the back of his mind, *no* .

The compassion he feels for this boy is nothing short of inconvenient, and yet he finds he wants to foster the feeling. He wants to allow it to grow, to see what it becomes. He doesn't allow himself to entertain the notion of love. He can't love Will, not this quickly. Deep emotional connections have always been virtually unattainable to him, and until now, that fact had never bothered him.

"Yeah, I think so." Will replies, his bag over his shoulder.

Hannibal searches his eyes for anything that might give away his current emotional state, but the boy is hard to read when he wants to be. He seems fine. One could argue, *too fine,* given his recent trauma. But, as a psychiatrist Hannibal is well aware everyone processes these things differently. He does his best to not view Will as a patient. That's not how he sees him.

Initially, Will had struck him as the kind of person to crumble under the pressure, the kind of person who would let trauma shape their very being. The more he learns of the boy, the less he believes that. Of course, he can't say for sure. Will hasn't been very forthcoming with his emotional state. Every night he's stayed here, he's awoken at least once from some terrible nightmare attempting to claw its way out of Will's head. And every night, Hannibal goes to the boy, to offer comfort, but aside from that first night, he hasn't allowed it. He won't even talk about the nightmares that often seem to weigh him down during the day.

Before they leave, Hannibal grabs a small box and presents it to Will. He'd picked up a new cellphone for the boy, not enjoying the idea that he'll be on campus with no way to contact Hannibal, or anyone else, if he needs help. He certainly did not need to buy him the newest, shiniest iPhone, but he did. He'd even gone for the deep purple color, rather than a simple white or black.

Will takes the box and opens it to reveal the iPhone inside. The boy's eyes light up, not unlike a child's on Christmas morning. Hannibal watches with a warm smile as he picks the phone up, inspecting the gadget.

"Did you buy this for *me* ?" Will asks, a look of disbelief on his face.

"I did. You said you do not have a cellphone, and I'd like for you to have one. My phone number is already programmed in, so you can reach out anytime you wish." Hannibal replies.

Will bites his lip, a look of worry etched onto his features.

“I don’t… I can’t pay you back for this.” Will whispers.

“I’m not asking you to, Will.”

"I don't know what to say. Thank you, Hannibal."

"That's more than enough."

Hannibal moves then, placing a gentle hand on Will's shoulder. He aches to touch the boy all the time, but refrains. Will can reach out when he's ready. His restraint falters, and he allows himself these occasional, small touches, finding himself unable to resist. The sustenance he gets from the boy's warmth beneath his hand is enough. He could be content with only these moments between them, despite the way he finds himself often aroused at the mere sight of Will.

Will surprises him by wrapping his arms around his torso in a hug. A genuine, tight hug. It takes Hannibal's brain a moment to catch up before he reciprocates, holding the boy in his arms. He doesn't want to think about how long it's been since someone had last hugged him in this way.

He dares to reach his hand up and card through Will's hair. He's rewarded with a small groan of satisfaction falling from Will's lips. Too quickly, the hug is over and they make their way to Johns Hopkins, where they'll depart from one another, much to Hannibal's regret.

"Please, don't hesitate to reach out if you need anything. And don't forget to take your medication. It's imperative that you finish the antibiotics." Hannibal tells him, internally cringing at how clinical he sounds.

"Alright, *dad* ." Will chides, an easy smile playing over his lips.

Hannibal doesn't have it in him to be upset at the name this time. He'd willingly be friend-zoned *(father-zoned?)* by Will if it meant he was happy. Physical desires be damned. It's not as if he's allowed them to control his life up until this point.

He watches Will as he gets out of the Bentley, and heads into his dormitory. He looks nothing like the scared kid who showed up at his doorstep just a few days ago. He looks fine, and the more Hannibal looks, the more he's convinced it's simply a mask, albeit a good one.

Once he's home, he finds himself in front of his laptop typing the name 'Will Graham' into the search bar. He doesn't find much. An old FaceBook page that hasn't been updated in years and a deactivated Twitter account. His lack of an online presence is odd for someone his age.

Next, despite whether or not it may be unethical, he uses his university login credentials to pull up Will's student profile. What he finds doesn't surprise him. Will is an exemplary student, and his professors seem to believe he's destined for great things. The student photo on file for him makes him look even more boy-ish than he already does, given that it was likely taken the summer before he started school there.

On the profile is his complete class schedule, along with his home address and emergency contact. His father's name is written there, *'Beau Graham'* , but there's no phone number. He frowns, wondering if Will really is as alone as he seems to be. The profile isn't going to tell him if Will has friends, but it does list his roommate's name, one *Randall Tier* , a mechanical engineering major.

Having already memorized Will's schedule, he decides he's done enough snooping for the day and closes his laptop. He also has a lecture on campus tomorrow morning he needs to prepare for, and decides to work on that. The topic is social exclusion, something he is intimately familiar with, having written a paper on the topic that's been published in a number of textbooks in the field of sociology. In reality, there isn't much to prepare for, but he enjoys going over a brief outline in preparation regardless.

His thoughts keep venturing back to the subject of Will Graham. He muses about the boy's childhood, and if he's fallen victim to some kind of social exclusion. Either due to his socioeconomic status or his sexuality. Both are avenues to exclusion.

Scrubbing his face against his stubble, he realizes he needs to shave. It's been a few days and he has more than a 5 o'clock shadow now. He's always so clean shaven, he wonders if his colleagues would even recognize him like this. Will hadn't seemed to mind.

Will

Being back in his dorm room is suffocating. Randall moved out for good, that much is clear, but he still worries he'll come back. Randall had been so angry at Will that night at the bar, and as much as he doesn't want to believe he set Will up to be assaulted, it makes sense. He's content with not knowing, the mere idea of confronting Randall about it sends him into a panic.

He'd been wondering when he would finally *feel* what had happened to him. The shock of it all, then the infection, left him with little time to dwell on it. He'd had more important matters at hand. Now, alone in his dorm room and Hannibal gone, he feels himself begin to crumble under the weight of the situation.

Sitting on his bed, he pulls his new phone from his pocket. Opening the messages app, he goes to type a text to Hannibal, but he stops, unsure of what to say. And even if he knew what he wanted to say, the man had only left a short time ago. Will isn't going to be that clingy. He can deal with this on his own.

He gets up and sets about making himself a calming cup of tea. He runs the hot water over the teabag, letting it steep in the cup before adding a bit of honey to sweeten it. As he slowly sips his tea, he feels his anxiety begin to subside. He takes deep breaths, letting his mind drift away as he stares out at the campus outside his window.

It is only a temporary reprieve. He has so much to do, and little motivation to do it. He's missed several days of classes by this point and he's behind on his assignments. He can't reach out to his professors and say *'oh hey I got hate-crimed, can I have an extension on my assignments?',* for fear that they'd ask questions, or report it to the police, not to mention it's just crazy to say something like that. He doesn't want anyone to know about this. He'd prefer to go on with his life and forget it ever happened.

His tea finished, he pulls out his old MacBook Air and logs into his Canvas portal. His class grades have all gone down from As to Bs, making him cringe. He clicks the first one, Introductory Chemistry II, and sees what he's missed. All in all, he isn't worried about that one, having excelled in Chemistry in high school. Most of the material he's learning now feels more like a review. He'll just have to ensure he doesn't miss any more assignments.

Calculus and Animal Behavior are also courses he's not worried about, seeing that he just needs to ensure he doesn't miss any other assignments. *Physics* is the course he knows needs most of his attention. It hadn't been offered at his high school, so this course was his first exposure to the subject. He wouldn't consider himself to be struggling, but he does entertain the idea that he may end up with a B as his final grade in the course. He wonders why it's necessary for a Behavioral Biology major.

He pulls out his textbooks and reads through the chapters he's missed in each course, taking notes along the way. By the time he's finished with that, it's already 2 o'clock and he has to

get ready to go to class. Dressing in fresh clothes and putting his supplies in his backpack, it feels almost *wrong* .

His entire self had been changed in a single night, in a single *hour* . Those men could have killed him, left him in that alleyway to bleed out. But he didn't die, he'd gotten up and found Hannibal. He knows that night could have gone differently had he ended up at someone else's door.

Even though it feels like it should, the world hasn't stopped its rotation and he's still expected to go to class. No matter how tight his skin suddenly feels on his body, how he feels grimy even after he showers, or how there seems to be a permanent lump in his throat. He frowns, looking at himself in the mirror. He sees his trauma written all over his face and wonders if everyone else will be able to see it, too. He wonders if it's all Hannibal sees when he looks at him.

There are still scrapes on his face and he walks with a slight limp, but if nobody knows what happened, they could easily just assume he was in a fight. His other, more telling, healing wounds are hidden from the public eye. Onlookers could believe he simply got too drunk at a bar and got roughed up by someone. He'd prefer that to the real story, he thinks.

Will's afternoon drags on, even though he only has the one class to attend. He feels exhausted, tired in a way that seeps all the way down into his bones. A tiredness that sleep isn't going to fix. Nonetheless, he finds that his mind keeps drifting.

To that night, to Hannibal, and even to his father. He aches to call the man. Even though he knows it would be pointless. He could never tell him what happened, would never tell him about Hannibal. Even if he had a good relationship with his father, he could imagine how telling a parent that he's met someone as old as him would go. Likely not well. And to disclose his assault to his father? He shudders at the notion.

His father is emotionally distant, but hadn’t been needlessly cruel when he found out that Will was gay while he was in high school. He isn’t homophobic, or overly religious. He’s never had any qualms with anyone regarding their sexuality, his son included. He wouldn’t care if Will had found happiness in another man. He’d be too busy telling Will he should have never left home, that his place was next to him working on boat motors.

He can hear it now, his father’s deep voice telling him *‘I told you so’* .

Sighing, he makes his away across campus to the student union, intending to go to the second floor and get a lemonade from Starbucks. He stops in his tracks, hearing laughter, causing the student behind him to run right into his back.

"Shit, I'm sorry." He says, turning to the girl behind him.

"It's alright." She replies, giving him a sad smile. "You look like you've had a rough day."

Does everyone really see the trauma written all over his face?

"I have." He says, unable to lie.

"I'm Alana. Were you heading to the union?"

"Yeah," He answers, brows knitted together. "And I'm Will."

"Mind if I come with you?"

He shrugs and they make their way to the student union. He gets a whiff of her perfume when they start walking. It's like a delicious mix of vanilla and strawberries and he likes it. It doesn't irritate his nose like a lot of other fragrances do.

He gets his drink, and takes a seat at a study table across from her. He's never been approached like this since he'd started college and he's not sure what to do, so he starts trying to make small talk.

"What's your major?" He asks, watching her pull out her laptop, a much newer MacBook Air than his, covered in stickers.

"Psychology. I'm a junior." She answers. "You?"

"Behavioral Biology." Will replies.

"No kidding? I thought about doing that, but decided against it when I saw all the math courses you need." She says, laughing softly.

"Math is a bitch. I'm a freshman, so I haven't gotten to the really difficult stuff yet."

After that, they work in silence. Will doesn't anticipate how nice it is to have company like this. He's so used to working alone, he really hadn't considered he might prefer this. He reads an article for his Animal Behavior class and finds that his thoughts keep wandering to the woman across from him.

"What are you working on?" He asks, seeing her brows draw together in either frustration or confusion.

"Not really working on anything, just reading something for a class." She answers, turning her screen so Will can see.

It's a paper on social exclusion. By Dr. Hannibal Lecter.

"You're in Dr. Lecter's class?" Will asks, unable to resist.

"Yeah. You've heard of him?" She asks.

"We've run into each other a time or two." He lies.

"Oh really? What's he like outside of lectures?"

Her attention is trained on Will now, her eyes sparkling at the topic of conversation. The way a slight flush graces her cheeks, he guesses she has a crush on the man. On *his* man. He stamps down the ridiculous possessiveness and tries to think of something to tell her.

"He's nice. Helpful." Will supplies. "Why do you want to know?"

Alana ducks her head and smiles, blushing a bit more. "I just find him fascinating. I think he's really handsome too."

Will can feel his eyes widen and the heat of anger burning in his chest, but he pushes it down. He's sure she doesn't mean anything by it - she'd said nothing untoward - but still it unsettles him.

"Uh... yeah...," Will stammers, unsure of how to respond. Truthfully, he finds Hannibal attractive too. Anyone with eyes would.

"You like him too?" She guesses.

"You could say that."

She doesn't seem like the kind of person to dislike someone for their sexuality, but he still feels like he should clarify that he isn't gay. He hates that his sexuality seems to be a trigger in and of itself now, feeling the unmistakable tendrils of a panic attack threatening to take hold of him.

Sputtering, he tries to undo what he's said, "I mean... I'm not... I'm not *gay* ."

Alana looks at him with a slight tilt of her head, obvious concern on her face.

"I don't mind if you are, you know. It's not anything to be ashamed of." She tells him.

He swallows thickly, thinking that it *is* something to be ashamed of. The assault on him for it proves that, but he isn't going to offer that information up to a stranger. No matter how kind she seems to be. He clenches his hands, closing and opening them nervously, feeling sweat begin to form on the back of his neck. He suddenly feels like he needs to leave.

The panic attack setting in for real now, Will begins to breathe more quickly. He looks up at Alana, his eyes wide.

"I-I have to go." He manages to get out between ragged breaths.

She looks alarmed, and for a moment he feels guilty for leaving her like this, but the guilt dissolves when she stands up and wraps her arms around him.

"It's okay. You don't have to go. Just take a few deep breaths and try to relax." She whispers soothingly in his ear, and the warmth of her hug is enough to bring him back to reality.

He takes a deep breath, grateful for her presence and understanding, and pulls away, attempting a smile.

"Thanks Alana. You're very kind."

She smiles, looking relieved. "Anytime, Will."

Her touch hadn't edged him deeper into his panic as he'd though it would have. Perhaps it's due to the fact she is unmistakably *not* male. Her arms are soft. He'd felt her round breasts against his own chest, and it had calmed him. Her scent had enveloped him and he felt like he could exist within it forever.

It isn't attraction, he knows that. But some small part of him almost wishes it was. Wishes that he could feel attraction to women. *It'd be safer* , he reasons. But, all of these thoughts about Alana makes him long for Hannibal's touch. His distinctly masculine features pressed against his body.

Calmed down now, he watches as Alana pulls out her cellphone, "What's your number? Maybe we can meet up again sometime?"

Will looks at her with confusion. He'd lost his shit at just the mention of his sexuality and she'd had to help him stave off a panic attack, *and* she wants to see him again? He must be imagining this. But he looks at her again, and she's still there, waiting to put his number into her phone.

He pulls out his own phone, reading off the digits to her and then puts her number into his. When they part ways, he feels calm. He also feels the overwhelming urge to call Hannibal and tell him about it. He wonders if it would be welcome and if their relationship is even on that level. Maybe the man would just be annoyed by it.

Hannibal

He'd half expected to receive a phone call, or a text, *something* from Will. But his phone is quiet all evening. He debates on reaching out himself, but resolves that Will may just need some space and time to himself.

He goes to bed early, attempting to quell his desire to reach out to Will, but he's unable to do so. He decides on a simple, *'Goodnight, Will.'* text.

Surprisingly, he gets a response almost immediately.

'Goodnight. And thank you again for everything.' Will replies.

Satisfied, he allows himself to close his eyes. His mind keeps drifting to Will, and soon he finds himself hard. He knows it isn't right, to think of Will in this way, but he can't stop himself. Pushing down his pajama pants, he frees his cock, brushing the tip with his thumb. He imagines that his hand is Will's and bites back a moan. Thoughts of the boy's innocent smile and the way his face flushes red when he's aroused makes Hannibal come embarrassingly quickly.

As he cleans himself off, he wonders if he'd be Will's first sexual experience. He'd show Will pleasure in such a way that the boy would never find anything close were he to leave him. He'd take him apart, first with his hands, then his mouth, and finally his cock. Will would be beneath him, writhing, begging for it.

Hannibal is an experienced lover, having had many in his lifetime--both men and women. None have ever been long term, and none have ever stirred feelings within him like Will has. He's also never been interested in someone so *young* . Had never even given the college students in his classes the time of day. And he would have to be blind to not notice the way some of them gawk at him.

One particular student stands out--Alana Bloom. The girl is bright, friendly, and always has insightful contributions to his lectures and discussions. He gets the feeling that she's more dutiful in his class than others because of how she feels about him.

She comes to all of his office hours, and when she wears tops that expose her cleavage, Hannibal would be lying if he said he'd never looked. But that's as far as it's gone for him. He'd never considered himself the kind of person to pursue his own students. But, well, Will *isn't* his student, he reminds himself.

Ethical concerns aside, he imagines having Will pressed against his desk, moaning beneath him as he nips at the boy's neck and ruts his clothed erection against Will's. Sighing, he does his best to banish the ideas, lest his spent cock become interested once more.

The next morning, he readies himself and makes the short drive to campus. He's early, and decides to stop and grab bagels and coffee for two. The decision having been made, he

arrives at Will's dorm to check on him. Once outside the building, he calls Will, who answers groggily.

The boy sounds pleased when he realizes who has called him and greets him at the door with a sleepy smile. Hannibal stops, pleasantly surprised by his clothing choice. He's wearing Hannibal's pajamas, the garment slung low on his waist, hanging over his hips. His T-shirt is threadbare, and too small for him. The white fabric leaves little to the imagination.

Will clears his throat and Hannibal realizes he's been staring.

"Good morning, Will. You look lovely." He says, deciding not to skirt around what he'd been doing.

The boy looks down at his clothing as if to check what he's wearing. Recognition passes over his features when his gaze falls to Hannibal's pajama pants.

"They're really comfortable. But they're too big for me." He replies, sheepishly.

"May I come in?" Hannibal asks, holding up the coffee and bagels.

"Sure." Will replies, smiling.

They sit together at Will's small table--a desk, really. As they chat and eat their bagels, Will moves closer and closer to him until their arms are nearly touching. Hannibal knows that this is beyond mere platonic conversation--not least because of the way Will is looking at him. His eyes sparkle with anticipation as he glances at Hannibal from beneath his lashes.

He can feel the desire radiating off Will, and wonders if the boy would be receptive to a kiss. They're close now, close enough to feel the heat of the other's breathing against their faces.

"Will," He begins, but is cut off as Will leans forward and presses his lips against Hannibal's. It's tentative, almost hesitant, but Hannibal responds, pushing his hands into the boy's hair and exploring his mouth hungrily.

Will tastes like strawberries and cream, and a hint of honey, and Hannibal finds himself wanting more. He knows he should pull away, but the feeling of the boy's lips against his own is too intoxicating.

Finally, he manages to pull away, looking down at Will with an intensity he hopes the boy will understand. Will looks back at him, their foreheads pressed together, and Hannibal can feel the rapid beating of his heart.

"Will, I--" He begins, unsure of what he wants to say.

Will pulls away and looks away, a flush rising to his cheeks.

Hannibal takes his hands in his own, his voice softer now.

"Will, I know this is not conventional, but I find myself wanting you more than I can describe."

The boy's eyes meet his again, and Hannibal can see the vulnerability in them.

"I want you too, Hannibal," Will replies, a smile playing at the corners of his lips.

The kiss was more than enough to make Hannibal's cock ache inside his slacks. He resists the urge to press his palm against it to relieve some of the ache. The way Will's face flushes and he shifts in his seat, it's clear he's aroused too. Hannibal glances down to the boy's groin and sees the outline of his erection there.

"I'm--" Will stutters, following Hannibal's gaze to his groin. "I'm sorry."

"For what?" Hannibal asks, brows furrowed.

Will gestures at the obvious erection tenting his pajamas.

He squirms at the admission, clearly embarrassed at what's happened. But Hannibal doesn't immediately understand *why,* so instead of questioning Will about his feelings further, he tells the boy the truth.

"You've had a similar effect on me, dear boy."

Will swallows audibly, clearly nervous.

"I desire you, Hannibal. I desire you sexually." But the cadence of his voice tells Hannibal he isn't happy about it.

"Why does that seem to upset you?" Hannibal replies, reaching for Will's hand and gently unclenching his fist.

"I'm gross. Or, at least, I thought I was, but it seems you desire me in the same way." Will says, working through his discomfort on his own. "I'm concerned I won't be able to give you what you want."

Hannibal nods, understanding. "I'll take whatever you want to give."

"The assault--it's made me *ashamed* of my sexuality. I never used to feel this way. And now, it almost feels like I'm putting myself back in the closet in a misguided attempt to keep myself *safe* ."

"All normal reactions, I assure you."

"And the fact that I can even feel arousal after what happened makes me sick to my stomach. It feels like I'm doing something *wrong* ."

"It isn't wrong. Would you tell another assault victim that their hypersexual feelings afterwards are wrong? Or someone who is sex repulsed afterwards?"

Will shakes his head no.

"Then why are you holding yourself to those arbitrary standards?"

Will looks at him with confusion on his face. Hannibal watches as the boy works it out in his head. The confusion slips from his face and he suddenly appears *determined* .

"When is your lecture?" Will asks.

"Not for another hour and a half, why?" Hannibal responds.

Will's eyes close, and his lips part slightly. Then Will is leaning in and pressing his mouth against Hannibal's. The boy's lips are soft and inviting, and he sighs into the kiss, pushing closer against Will. He wraps an arm around Will's waist, pulling him onto his lap. Momentarily forgetting their conversation, Hannibal finds himself lost in the physical sensation of Will in his lap and his lips on his own.

Will

Will doesn’t entirely believe what he’s doing, straddling Hannibal’s lap and kissing him like he needs it to breathe. But it feels good, even if the nagging thought in the back of his mind is telling him it's *wrong* . Is it wrong because Will is ashamed of being gay? Or is it because Hannibal is old enough to be his father?

Breaking the kiss suddenly, Will asks, "How old are you?"

Hannibal pulls back slightly, looking at Will with confusion on his face, before answering "I am 44."

Same age as my father, Will muses to himself. It doesn't fill him with disgust like he thought it should. He's always liked older men. The fact that it doesn't bother him a bit shouldn't come as a surprise.

Will shifts on Hannibal's lap and leans forward to take the man's lips with his own once more. When Hannibal sucks on his bottom lip, he feels like he might come right then and groans appreciatively into Hannibal's mouth. He trails his lips downward, licking and sucking on Hannibal's throat gently so as not to leave a mark, but it seems to be enough to have the desired effect.

Will's hands unsteadily move for the button of Hannibal's shirt, undoing each button with care before pushing the garment back and exposing his chest. Unable to resist, Will's hands then reach forward and rest on his pecs. He tugs gently on the silvery gray hair there, wondering how hirsute Hannibal might be in other... *areas* . The thought turns him on more than it probably should and he finds himself practically salivating at the prospect of finding out.

Before Hannibal has time to react to any of what Will is doing, he wraps his arms around the man's waist and presses his face into Hannibal's chest. His hands begin to move up and down his sides, exploring every inch of him before finally moving around to the small of his back. He pulls Hannibal forward, so that their bodies are closer than ever as he slides one hand up and around the back of Hannibal's neck, drawing him in for a passionate kiss.

Suddenly, he gets off Hannibal's lap and sinks down to his knees in one swift motion.

"What are you doing?" Hannibal asks, a hint of a smirk playing on the corner of his lips.

Will smirks back and answers, "I'm going to show you just how attractive I think you are."

Hannibal gasps softly when Will reaches down and deftly undoes the button of his trousers, pushing them down so that he can feel Hannibal's hard cock against his palm. Will looks up at him, his eyes wide and his face flushed with arousal. He's sure he's the picture of innocence right now, as he strokes Hannibal's cock through his underwear.

He hooks his thumbs into the waistband, and looks up to Hannibal and asks in a purposefully sultry voice, "May I?"

He watches Hannibal's face as he processes Will's request. His adam's apple bobs up and down as he swallows and nods. He lifts his hips to assist in pulling his trousers and underwear down his thighs, exposing his cock.

Will had known he was big, but seeing it like this for the first time is almost intimidating. He worries he won't be able to pleasure him in the way he wants to. Will stares in arousal as he takes Hannibal's cock in hand for the first time. He strokes it slowly from the base to the tip, brushing over the sensitive head with his thumb. As he pulls the digit away, a string of Hannibal's pre-cum follows with it.

Will resists the urge to put his thumb in his mouth, and murmurs, "that's a lot of pre-cum,"

There'd also been a noticeable wet patch on Hannibal's underwear, and seeing the way his cock beads up at the tip as soon as he's removed his thumb and swiped away what had built up, he wonders if it would have shown through his trousers, too.

"I have very active... Cowper's glands." Hannibal replies with a soft laugh, having heard Will's murmuring.

"Clearly," Will responds, then sinks his mouth onto Hannibal's cock.

The older man tries to bite back a moan at the sudden stimulation, but fails. Will hollows out his cheeks and sucks, determined to get Hannibal to make more of those noises. He's never done this before and doesn't even know if he's any good at it, but he finds it pleasurable... to pleasure someone he cares for in this way.

With all of his attention focused on Hannibal, his cock twitches, still trapped in his (Hannibal's) pajamas. Will, unable to resist, pulls them down just enough to free his cock and takes it in his hand. He strokes himself in time with sucking Hannibal and moans at the ecstasy of the situation. He feels his own orgasm building embarrassingly quickly, but is distracted by Hannibal's hands suddenly carding through his hair.

The man's hands grip his head with more force as his thighs begin to tense. Will couldn't stop now even if he'd wanted to with the hands holding his head in place. His jaw aches as he keeps moving until Hannibal's hips begin to thrust up slowly, then faster. Will allows his face to be fucked, and feels himself drooling helplessly around the cock in his mouth.

Hannibal's thrusts get deeper and Will gags at the intrusion in his throat, but he doesn't mind. He just breathes through his nose and lets Hannibal take what he needs. His own hands have left his cock to grip onto Hannibal's calves, as if he's holding on for dear life.

He moans at the rough, and surprisingly *arousing* , treatment. When Hannibal stills and comes down Will's throat, he's almost disappointed that it's over. Hannibal pulls out his spent cock and Will swallows the bitter liquid down his throat. The taste isn't quite as offensive as he had imagined it would be.

He wipes away the saliva drying on his chin with his sleeve and looks up at Hannibal. The man is openmouthed and looking at Will like he's the most gorgeous thing in the world. Will squirms under his gaze, wondering what it is that Hannibal sees in him. Silence stretches between them, Hannibal appearing comfortable to keep watching Will, who is still on his knees.

"I've never, uh, done that before." Will finally admits, his face surely flushing a deeper red.

Hannibal's hand reaches out to caress his jaw and then tilts Will's head up so that he's looking him in the eye before saying, "You did wonderfully."

Will smiles, feeling another blush starting to form on his cheeks. He stands up, and Hannibal helps steady him, their hands entwining together.

"Thank you," Will says.

"Come here." Hannibal says, motioning for Will to straddle his lap.

As he stands, he pulls the pajamas he's wearing back up over his hips. His cock is still half hard, but he feels sated in a way he's not used to. He feels no urgency to chase his own release, he just wants to press into Hannibal's chest and breathe in the man's scent. Will straddles Hannibal's lap and snakes his arms around his neck. He's slightly taller than Hannibal like this, so he looks down at the man and unconsciously licks his lips.

Hannibal's hand comes up behind Will's head and pulls him in for a kiss. Thrown off guard, Will moans in surprise into Hannibal's mouth. His cock is well on its way to being fully hard once more. The older man's other hand trails down Will's body, squeezing his hips and reaching around to knead his ass. Will has to resist the urge to grind his cock against Hannibal's stomach.

The restraint disappears when Hannibal's mouth latches onto Will's neck and sucks. Will's hips move of their own accord, chasing the pleasure. He's so aroused that he feels the heat of it from his fingers to his toes. It's a floaty feeling that leaves a pleasant buzzing just beneath his skin. He wants Hannibal to touch him, to touch his cock, but he doesn't know how to ask.

Hannibal's mouth trails across his neck and down to his collar bone, licking and sucking the exposed skin along the way. The hand on his ass move upward to snake around his waist and pull him forward, pressing Will right up against Hannibal. Will chokes out a surprised moan at the new feeling of being pressed against him.

Another surprised gasp falls from his lips when Hannibal lifts them both up and lays Will down on the bed.

"Close your eyes," Hannibal says in a low voice, and Will obeys without question.

He feels Hannibal's hands move from his waist to caress his chest and stomach. The man's touch is gentle and soothing, but with an underlying heat that sends Will's arousal into overdrive. He gasps and twists in pleasure as Hannibal keeps exploring, coming closer and

closer to Will's already straining cock. When the man finally rubs his clad cock, Will cries out in pleasure.

Pulling down Will's pajamas, Hannibal begins to stroke and rub his thumb over the sensitive head, and Will can feel his orgasm building faster than he'd ever expected. His hips jerk up uncontrollably, and he grips the sheets tightly as he comes.

When he opens his eyes again, Hannibal is watching him intently with a satisfied smile. Will smiles back, feeling content in a way he hadn't expected. He'd been worried before that he would be no good at pleasing Hannibal, and even that he wouldn't like it himself. His brain can't even entertain the idea that either of them might not have liked what they've just done.

He watches as Hannibal checks his watch and tries to straighten up his appearance as best as he can. The older man frowns, looking down at a currently blissed out Will.

"I'm sorry to rush off like this, but I'm going to be late for my lecture if I do not leave now." Hannibal says.

Will looks up, frowning. He doesn't want Hannibal to leave. Not after what they've just shared. It feels too much like abandonment, but he doesn't say that.

Instead, he replies, "I understand. I'll talk to you later?"

"Of course."

And then Hannibal is gone and Will is lying on his bed alone. His release cooling on his stomach.

Hannibal

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Hannibal can't stop thinking about Will as he makes his way across campus to his lecture. He regrets leaving so suddenly, and truthfully, he regrets the rough treatment he'd subjected the boy to. He'd ended up losing control when Will had been eager enough to get on his knees for him. He'd been rougher than he ever wanted to be with him.

And then, to be reminded that it was Will's first time, it made some kind of guilt twist in his stomach and sit there heavily. He feels as if he should be apologizing, begging for Will's forgiveness. Instead, he'd left suddenly, leaving Will lying on his bed.

He hopes that Will isn't spiraling like he is right now. The boy had seemed a little bit off when he'd left, but initially he'd chalked it up to having to leave so suddenly. He'd have never left a lover like that, and yet he'd done it to Will. He shouldn't have allowed their rendezvous to go further than kissing. He knew they were short on time.

He feels terrible when he finally makes it to the lecture hall. He has five minutes to spare so he uses it to power up his MacBook and prepare his presentation on social exclusion.

"Positive social contact is essential for psychological and physiological health. People who feel socially alienated or rejected are susceptible to a host of behavioral, emotional, and physical problems, suggesting that human beings may possess a fundamental need to belong." Hannibal begins, once his students have settled into the lecture hall.

Hannibal finds that he talks at his students more than discusses with them. He typically prefers to have active conversations, garnering their input on whatever they're discussing that day. But not today, because the only thing on his mind is Will Graham.

Finally, he decides to pose a question to the lecture hall, "Why do we, as a social species, seem so eager to reject members of our own kind?"

Alana Bloom raises her hand immediately. He'd known she would.

"Yes?" He says expectantly.

"Even though we're of the same species, there are a multitude of things that make us different from one another. Some of these differences are more socially acceptable than others."

"What are some differences that you believe cause exclusion?"

"I think anything can, but most often you'll find it in groups with different religious beliefs or sexual orientation. Those core values are strong enough to not only exclude others, but to react violently to them."

"Why?" Hannibal asks.

“People who are seen as different might be viewed as having moral impurity. There is a connection between moral impurity and the belief that the person is tainted or diseased in some way. We generally like to avoid people who are ill, so this metaphorical correlation makes them even more excluded.” Alana says.

“Very insightful.” Hannibal replies, though he hadn’t really listened to what she was saying. If he had, he'd known she was simply regurgitating the things he'd said in the paper.

From what he knows of Will, the boy certainly suffers from social exclusion. He never speaks of his friends or family, leading Hannibal to believe he has none. Hannibal imagines Will as a young man, lonely and unpopular, sitting with his shoulders slumped and his back curved as he slouches in his desk, avoiding the eyes of the students who pass him by. Did he have any friends then?

Growing up, did Will ever have a good relationship with his father? Did he have a relationship at all? The psychiatrist in him wonders relentlessly about the boy's past and how things that occurred might have brought Will to this very point in his life. The person inside him knows he can't ask Will all of these questions, or he risks scaring him away.

His sexuality, something that works to exclude him, also is what led to his assault. People view Will as *other* . As someone who is morally inferior because of his sexuality. In that same rationale, Hannibal himself could be viewed the same way. Identifying as pansexual opens him up to similar scrutiny, though no one knows of his sexuality. Most of his partners have been women.

It’s disconcerting how easily Hannibal can see the functions of social exclusion in Will. It makes him angry. It’s obvious to anyone who interacts with the boy that he craves closeness, intimacy. He wants friends, wants to be cared for. The desire seems to radiate off him most of the time. It makes Hannibal’s own heart ache in turn.

If he weren’t in the middle of a lecture, he’d go back to Will’s dorm right away. He longs to see the boy again, and hopes he’ll forgive him for his untoward behavior. He pushes the memory away, knowing that thinking of his cock down Will’s throat in the middle of the lecture hall would lead to an embarrassing situation despite how guilty he feels about it.

Finally, the class ends and his students file out. He sighs to himself when he sees Alana staying behind.

“Alana, you had wonderful insight on the lecture.” Hannibal tells her, hoping the compliment will satisfy her.

“I found it fascinating! Your paper was one of the best I’ve ever read.” Alana replies, leaning on the podium now.

Hannibal smiles warmly at her. He knows the girl likes him. He wonders if she wears the low cut blouses on purpose to his lectures. He’s never seen her in anything more modest.

“Do you need help with something?” Hannibal asks, resisting the urge to check his watch.

“I do. I have a question about the lecture. But I was hoping we could discuss it somewhere more… *private* .”

“Here is fine. What is it?” He asks, effectively shutting her advances down.

Alana’s face flushes a deep red, having been caught and rejected in her ploy.

“No… no, it’s alright.” She says hurriedly, turning and walking out of the classroom.

Hannibal sighs. The woman had wasted his time because of some kind of crush. It’s *rude* , he muses to himself. When he thinks of what dish he’d prepare with her, he’s reminded that he himself was quite rude today. With Will.

His hypocrisy doesn’t usually bother him, but right now it does. It sits heavy in his gut. He feels like he should be punished for his actions. It isn’t a feeling he’s accustomed to.

He had vowed to himself never to feel remorse for his actions, but something about Will brought out a feeling he had long thought himself incapable of. He wasn’t ready to accept that this was how he really felt, but he couldn’t deny it either.

Packing up his MacBook and placing his supplies in his bag, he pulls out his cellphone. He hopes to see a message from Will, but there’s nothing to be found. Only a silenced spam call he’d received during his lecture. He debates on calling the boy. He knows they need to talk, but he’s not good at this. He’s not good at admitting when he’s done something wrong. It’s hard for him because it’s never mattered before.

He curses himself for becoming so invested in Will so soon. He had met many intriguing people throughout his life, but never had any of them stuck with him in such a way. His thoughts and his emotions were filled with Will, and he couldn't shake the feeling that he had already gone too far.

He decides to call the boy, scrolling through his contacts to Will’s name. The phone rings, once, twice, three times. Then goes to voicemail.

“This is Will Graham, I'm sorry I can’t answer the phone right now. Please leave me a message and I’ll get back to you. Thank you!”

Hannibal smiles at the message. His boy is so polite. But he ends the call before the beep, opting not to leave a voicemail. Maybe Will is busy. Or maybe he just doesn’t want to talk. Hannibal hopes he’s just busy. Nonetheless, he can’t leave things the way he did earlier and resolves to just stop by the boy’s dorm before leaving campus.

He reaches Will's door and knocks. There's no answer, but he can hear faint music playing from within, so he tries once more. When there's still no reply, he decides to take a chance and see if the door is unlocked. Finding that it is, he makes his way inside the dimly lit room, at first seeing no sign of the boy. Further into the room, he sees the source of the music-- Will's laptop sitting on the bed. He finds Will there too, curled up under a blanket, fast asleep. Hannibal stands unmoving for a moment, watching the rise and fall of Will's chest in the soft

light. The boy looks so peaceful, so vulnerable, and Hannibal can't help but feel protective of him.

The boy's cheeks are flushed as if he'd been crying. And the way he's curled in on himself makes him appear as if he's in pain. But his physical injuries should be well on their way to healed by now.

Chapter End Notes

Hannibal’s paper is actually this one: https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/11316010/

Will

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

After Hannibal left for his lecture, Will had begun spiraling. He hadn't been sure why he was feeling so despondent, but the weight of it made him feel as if he were choking. He'd enjoyed his time with Hannibal. He'd even enjoyed the rough treatment, relishing the feeling of the older man's hands in his hair, holding his face and fucking it. It'd made him feel like an object to be used, and that certainly hadn't bothered him, given how aroused he was while it was happening.

But then, Hannibal had left. And Will was alone with his thoughts. His own release that had felt so unbelievable only moments ago had suddenly made him feel *dirty* . The way his spend had begun to cool on his stomach made him nauseous and he'd gotten up to clean himself off right after Hannibal's departure.

He'd showered but the nausea remained. Putting on a clean pair of boxers and a T-shirt, he'd climbed into his bed and curled up under the blanket. Unable to focus on his studies, he opted to turn on some soft music and sleep. Hoping that whenever he woke up he'd be feeling better. He falls asleep at some point, his afternoon class all but forgotten. He wouldn't have been able to pull himself out of bed even if he'd been awake.

When he wakes up, it's to the feeling of his bed dipping down, someone sitting on the edge of it. He jolts awake with a start, almost tumbling out of his bed in the process. Once his heart rate comes down, he realizes it's Hannibal.

"Your door was not locked. And I called you earlier. When you did not answer I became concerned." Hannibal says, his voice even.

"My door wasn't locked?" Will asks. It makes sense, since he has no memory of locking it after Hannibal had left in a haste. He was far too preoccupied with the way his own release had been mocking him and making him nauseated.

Will expects the man to chastise him for his carelessness, but the words don't come. Instead, Hannibal's face appears tight, conflicted. The silence makes Will frown.

"Are you upset with me?" Will asks, swallowing around the lump in his throat.

"What? No. It's you who should be upset with me, Will. I crossed a line earlier and I am sorry." Hannibal says, looking down at his hands.

Will sits up, one hand rubbing the sleep from his eyes. "I... I don't know what you mean."

Hannibal's gaze meets his own. "I should not have lost my control like that. I should have respected your boundaries."

Will knows what he's talking about, but the apology nonetheless catches him off guard. "It's okay. I liked it. I think."

Hannibal sighs, running a hand through his hair. "That does not make it right, Will. I need to do better. Be better. For you."

Will feels a warmth spread through him at Hannibal's words. He had never had someone care for him like this before. He reaches out, taking Hannibal's hand in his own. "You don't have to be perfect, Hannibal. Just... be here with me."

"You wouldn't have been able to tell me if you'd wanted me to stop. In my eyes, that's a violation. I violated you, Will." Hannibal admits, voice strained.

The small whine that escapes Will's throat in response to his words makes his cheeks flush red in embarrassment. But he doesn't want to think of what happened between them as anything other than consensual. Hannibal is not his abuser. And yet, he'd felt so dejected after he'd left. He'd felt used but it hadn't felt the same as it did while it was happening.

Even now, he wonders how he'd ever enjoyed such treatment. He doesn't want to be seen as a thing to be used. Not really. And it is exactly how he'd felt when Hannibal left. He is quiet, unsure how to explain these feelings to Hannibal. Or even if he should.

And yet, his mouth moves of its own volition and all he can do is be honest, in hopes he can make Hannibal understand how it had hurt so much.

"It felt like you didn't want me anymore. Like I wasn't good enough, and you'd found something better. I felt every bit disposable and replaceable. I can't tell you how much it hurt. I was empty and I don't want to feel like that again." Will confesses, his voice trembling.

The room is deathly quiet as Hannibal takes it all in. He reaches out, cupping Will's face in his hands and pressing a gentle kiss to his forehead.

"I'm so sorry, Will. You are not disposable. Not to me. I will do better. I promise." He murmurs, and Will breathes a sigh of relief.

Will nods, leaning into Hannibal's touch. Hannibal's strong arms wrap around him and pull him closer as he takes a deep breath to inhale his scent. He feels the warmth radiating from Hannibal's embrace as the tension seeps from his muscles.

"Do you know what sub-drop is?" Hannibal asks after they both relish in the contact for a few sweet moments.

Will knows he's heard the word. But he can't place the meaning.

"It sounds familiar, but no." He finally admits.

"Sub-drop primarily happens to a submissive after a scene in BDSM play. But it can and does happen outside of those dynamics, and I'm fairly certain that's what you're experiencing."

"If it feels this *shitty* , why does anyone do things that cause it?" Will asks.

"Because those acts feel good, and sub-drop doesn't always happen. Especially if there's appropriate aftercare, which I did not give you."

"But this wasn't a scene and I'm not a... submissive." Will argues, his voice becoming quieter as his sentence ends.

He's not Hannibal's submissive, right? He'd know if he was, he reasons. It seems like the kind of thing that one would discuss before doing anything with a partner. Of course, they hadn't discussed Hannibal fucking Will's throat, leaving him to gag and drool around his cock. So perhaps communication isn't one of their strong suits.

"These dynamics don't have to be clearly defined for you to fit into them. And it isn't something you'd identify yourself as all the time. Only in specific situations."

"Are you trying to make me okay with being a submissive?" Will asks accusingly, even though he can't deny the twinge of arousal he feels at the idea of being *Hannibal's* submissive.

"Not at all. I'm only trying to explain to you how you might have been susceptible to sub-drop." Hannibal reasons with him.

Will backs away from Hannibal, pulling his knees up to his chest and resting his chin on them as he thinks. He's pretty sure he'd prefer their sex life to be... vanilla. *Most* of the time. Or all of the time if sub-drop is a thing that seems he's overly prone to experiencing.

Hannibal removes his suit jacket and vest and takes off his shoes, getting into the twin-sized bed with Will, pulling him close. The only way both men fit is if they're pressed right up against one another and Will certainly doesn't mind. This is clearly what he'd needed earlier when Hannibal had to leave for his lecture. Hannibal's touch is soothing, like a balm to his emotional wounds.

"So... is this aftercare?" Will asks, his face pressed into Hannibal's chest.

"More or less."

Will sighs, feeling Hannibal's hand stroke along his side, down to his hip and up again. Will turns, placing his back toward Hannibal and pressing his body as closely to the other man's as he can. He unconsciously wriggles his hips and grinds his ass into Hannibal's groin. He stills, realizing what he’s doing.

Thankfully, it doesn't seem to have made Hannibal hard. He doesn't want to feel obligated to do something about it. As much as he likes Hannibal and wants to be with him, the idea of *any* kind of sex sits uncomfortably in his stomach right now. A lingering effect of the sub-drop, he reasons to himself. *Or because he's still traumatized* , his brain adds unhelpfully.

They both end up falling asleep. And at some point in the night, Hannibal had woken up and gone home, leaving Will alone in his bed. He tries not to be sad when he wakes the next morning. At least he doesn’t feel the way he did yesterday. Most of the discomfort of sub-drop seems to be a memory now.

Chapter End Notes

reading about sub-drop led me to an article about postcoital dysphoria and I learned something about myself in the process...
writing fan-fiction is the gift that keeps on giving.

Here's the article if anyone's curious: https://www.issm.info/sexual-health-qa/what-is-postcoital-dysphoria-post-sex-blues/

I'm just going to start putting things I find during my research into the chapter notes sections of my fics. Reading the article isn't imperative to understanding the work, though!

Hannibal

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Hannibal leaves as the sun begins to rise. He hadn't planned on spending the night, but he finds that things rarely go as planned for him when it comes to Will Graham. He'd debated on waking the boy to say goodbye, but he looked so peaceful as he slept, so Hannibal just left.

Once he's home and showers, he sends Will a text apologizing for leaving. Thankfully Will replies less than ten minutes later accepting his apology because Hannibal knows he would have gone back to campus to check on him. And he can't do that every time Will doesn't communicate. He has a life, obligations outside of Will. Ever since he's met the boy, he hasn't even made time for his other proclivities.

The day drags on, his patients seemingly more grating than usual. Franklyn is first, a neurotic man who has an obsession with him. Hannibal finally tells him he is giving him a referral, which of course, ends with Franklyn in tears. His next appointment with Margot Verger is the same as it always is. His less than professional opinion is that she would get better if she killed her narcissistic brother, but she isn't ready to hear that yet. *Eventually* , he muses.

Then, he'd had his first appointment with a new patient, *Randall Tier* . He hadn't orchestrated this turn of events, but he's intrigued nonetheless.

"Tell me, Randall, what brings you here today?" Hannibal begins, as if this were any other normal appointment.

"I feel... guilty. I can't eat, can't sleep." Randall admits. The man, only a little older than Will, looks terrible.

The man slumps in the chair, his blue eyes barely visible beneath deep, dark circles. His face is un-groomed, with patches of grizzled facial hair growing wildly in every direction. His neutral-colored sweatpants look as if they haven't been washed in weeks, and the Johns Hopkins hoodie draped over his sturdy frame is stained with various liquids. His expression of utter misery is unmistakable.

"What is it that has you so guilt-ridden?" Hannibal inquires. He is certain it relates to Will, but he could be wrong. This man might not even know what's become of his former roommate.

"This will stay in this room, right?" Randall asks desperately.

"As long as you are not currently a danger to yourself or others, yes." Hannibal answers. He wouldn't disclose anything anyway. This man is his to deal with.

"I think I hurt someone." Randall admits, his eyes glistening with tears.

The pain emanating from the man almost makes Hannibal pity him. But all he has to do is recall the night Will stumbled into his life, broken and bleeding, and the feeling is gone. This man should suffer for what he's done.

"What happened?"

Randall recounts the night when he, his friends, and Will, went out. He doesn't mention Will by name, but he does disclose that the boy was his roommate and the name of the bar they went to. It's a seedier establishment though not far from his home. It's how Will managed to make it there. Randall insists he didn't actually hurt Will, only insulted him and told him not to come back to campus.

"But I left him there. I saw those men and I knew they were going to hurt him. I don't even know if he's *okay!"*

"What led you to lash out at your roommate in this way?"

"I found out he was gay and felt... *betrayed* . You know--living with him. How was I supposed to know whether or not he would try something?"

Hannibal suppresses the snarl threatening to leave his throat. He's never been particularly bothered by banal matters like these, but Randall's concerns sound like classic homophobia. And the idea that anyone could feel threatened by someone as... *kind* as Will seems preposterous. Randall especially. The man is taller, more broad, and obviously stronger than Will. The boy would never be able to take this man in a fight.

Of course, Hannibal has never seen Will fight. He entertains the possibility that he's underestimating Will. But he can only gauge his abilities from what he's observed thus far, and even if he's wrong, Will doesn't *look* like a threat. No one would have any reason to suspect him to be capable of any real damage.

"What makes you suspect anything even happened after you left your roommate at the bar?" Hannibal questions. "Perhaps nothing did and you're worried for no reason."

"I saw him on campus afterward. I didn't approach him and he didn't see me, but I could tell he was hurting. He was limping and there were injuries on his face." Randall admits reluctantly.

"Have you considered reaching out to him?"

"What? No. Sure, I feel bad that he was hurt but he isn't my friend. We were just roommates."

Hannibal is struck by how similar Randall's way of thinking is to that of the other students on campus. Some young adults are so quick to turn on their peers, simply for being open about their sexuality. It makes Hannibal's blood boil, if only for the pain it's caused Will. It's naive to believe things aren't the same as they used to be. There's still hate *everywhere* .

"But you feel guilt for the possibility that your roommate was injured?"

Randall nods, his eyes still glistening.

Hannibal takes a deep breath, his sense of anger abating enough that he can actually address the man in front of him.

"Perhaps you need to examine your own prejudice." Hannibal says, though he wants to say *much* more.

"I'm not... like that. I don't hate him." Randall argues.

"Are you still living with him?"

"No. I moved out after that night. I'm staying with my fraternity now."

Hannibal takes a moment to assess Randall's body language, trying to read between the lines of his words.

"May I offer some advice?" Hannibal asks.

Randall nods.

"You need to confront your own prejudices head-on if you ever hope to atone for your part in this. And if you truly feel guilty about what happened to your roommate, then you owe it to him to reach out and try to make things right."

Randall sighs, looking down at his lap. "I don't even know where to start. I don't even know how to begin to apologize."

Hannibal leans back in his chair, considering Randall thoughtfully. "It won't be easy, but it needs to be done. If you're serious about making amends, then you need to take action."

Randall looks up, meeting Hannibal's gaze. For a moment, they sit in silence, the weight of the situation heavy between them.

Finally, Randall speaks. "Do you think he would even want to hear from me?"

Hannibal smiles faintly. "You won't know unless you try." Hannibal doesn't think Will will be receptive to Randall's attempts at amends, if the man even tries. But he is *curious* what will happen. Even if Randall feels bad about what he's done, he's still a homophobic, pathetic excuse for a person and caused Will a great deal of pain. It isn't something one can easily look past. But maybe it will help Will. Perhaps it will give him some closure. Hannibal will just have to wait and see.

Chapter End Notes

Had to edit this after posting because apparently I forgot halfway through that they shouldn’t be mentioning Will by name 😬

Will

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Will is quiet for the rest of the week. He texts Hannibal every so often, but he spends most of his time absorbed in his classes. He's missed so much now that it seems like an uphill battle just to pass this semester. The idea threatens to send him into a breakdown, but he doesn't let it. Even if he has one semester of not so great grades, he'll be fine. He's human. He can still get into graduate school.

He sighs in relief, seeing his score on his most recent exam. He'd managed to get a 95%. By the time Friday rolls around, he's exhausted. It feels like the week dragged, and what was only a few days seemed more like a month.

Will finds himself missing Hannibal terribly, and it's like a physical pain that he just can't shake. He wonders if this is what addicts must feel when they're going through withdrawals, and he briefly contemplates if that could be the reason why he yearns for Hannibal. The thought of being without him sends an aching longing through his chest, leaving him feeling empty and hollow.

It's late afternoon by the time his last class is over, and he begins his walk across campus to his dorm. He'd wanted to make plans with Hannibal for this weekend, but he held back out of a fear of being too clingy. He knew that his desire to spend time with Hannibal was evident, and he didn't want to be seen as too needy.

Hannibal has given no indication that he wishes to hurt Will, but if he knows that he feels like he *needs* Hannibal, it opens the door for manipulation. Will knows he's naïve, but he isn't stupid. He knows people in positions of power abuse their subordinates all the time, whether it's intentional or not. And even though he's not in any of Hannibal's classes, the man is still the same age as his father and that's an automatic power differential.

He should tread carefully. They shouldn't be advancing their relationship as fast as they are. They probably shouldn't have a relationship *at all* , Will points out to himself and immediately banishes the thought. Thinking about Hannibal leaves him with a feeling of intense longing and he's not sure what to do with it. He just can't keep his thoughts away; they are always there, lurking in the back of his mind. It's suffocating to feel so dependent on another person. He can't imagine his life without Hannibal in it.

Will sighs and continues his walk home. Crossing the last courtyard before he reaches his building, he sees him. Randall. His previous roommate. Will gulps, and before he can turn and walk away, Randall spots him and begins to approach.

Even if it isn't the other man's intention, Will feels like he's being cornered by a predator. He backs up a step when Randall gets close, every muscle fiber in his body screaming for him to run. But he stays put. Planted in his spot as if he's glued there.

"Will, can we talk?" Randall asks.

His voice is soft, lower than Will's ever heard it. It almost sounds *kind* .

Brows knitting together, Will responds; "What do you want?"

He tries to sound sure of himself, but he fails. His voice breaks on the last syllable. Randall hadn't assaulted him, and he's not the one that haunts Will's dreams, but he still feels that Randall is partially responsible for what happened. And just seeing the man brings the memories to the forefront of his mind, yanking them out of the box he'd tried so desperately to shut them into.

Randall takes this as a sign to continue. "I just wanted to say I'm sorry for the way things ended between us."

Will feels a wave of anger wash over him, tempering the nerves that had kept him rooted to the spot. He steps back again, and his mouth opens before he can stop it.

"I thought you wanted to be my friend." His voice is low, and he laughs dryly. The tone carries all his hurt from the betrayal of their never really there friendship, and he watches with satisfaction as Randall's face grows wary and worried in response.

Will realizes then how far he's come from being Randall's prey - he could shove him away and run off if he wanted to. He doesn't have to stay and listen to any of this. But he does anyway. He's interested in hearing what the man has to say, even if he doesn't like it.

"What exactly are you sorry for?" Will growls.

"For leaving you at the bar."

Will notices the lack of apology for the way he'd spoken to him that night.

"What about what you said?"

Randall visibly cringes, his softened features becoming hard once more. Will knows immediately the man isn't sorry for it. He's still a homophobic asshole. Randall says nothing as the gears in Will's head turn.

"Do you know what they did to me?" Will asks.

"I... no." Randall stammers. "Tell me."

Will huffs a laugh, "No, I don't think so. You know what? I think it's best if you just leave me alone." He turns away from Randall and continues his walk home.

He wasn't sure if Randall would follow, but when he chances a look behind him, he's pleased to see the man standing where he'd left him a look of disbelief on his face. Once he makes it into his dorm room, he sighs. He notices that his hands are trembling uncontrollably, reverberating up his arms until his entire body shakes.

Against his will, his mind conjures up all the ways he could hurt Randall. To make him feel a modicum of the suffering he's experienced. Images of Randall in agony flood his mind, and even when he tries to banish them, they don't budge. Instead, his thoughts remain a cacophony of blood and terror inside his head.

He imagines himself above Randall, He feels his grip tightening on Randall's throat, constricting his airway. He revels in the way Randall thrashes and scrambles, frantically clawing at his hands, vainly trying to pull himself free from the punishing grasp. With a single surge of strength he tightens further, watching as Randall's face turns a deep shade of red before fading into an eerie pallor. Seconds later, finally giving up the fight for life, Randall's body goes limp and his eyes glaze over like two empty mirrors.

He gasps, almost choking on his own breath as he collapses against the closed door, leaning heavily against the cold wood. With a heavy thump, he slides down to the cold floor of his room and sits there, feeling the ice seeping into his bones.

The interaction with Randall seems to have made the memories rush back, invading Will's head like a tidal wave. He remembers the chanting and laughter of his attackers, the smells of smoke and alcohol, the feeling of being completely helpless as he tried to defend himself from them. It had been horrific.

Of course he wants Randall to suffer. He deserves it, Will thinks numbly. Had the man shown him any kindness, and hadn't left him at that bar, or better yet, hadn't even invited him out, none of this would have happened. He wouldn't be on the floor of his dorm room, trying to pick up the shattered remains of his psyche.

Will curls into a tighter ball as panic consumes him. Hot tears gather in his eyes and stream down his face. He feels like he can't breathe, like there is no air left for him to take into his lungs. His heart beats fast, thumping against his chest too hard for him to mistake it for anything else other than fear - pure terror.

He chokes on a sob, and pulls at his hair, wanting the pain of it to replace the fear consuming him from the inside out. It doesn't work, and it only intensifies with each tug. He'd believed he was handling what had happened really well, considering. And now it feels as if he's back at square one. Curled in on himself, trembling, *terrified* . All that's missing are the physical aches, but he swears he can still feel phantom pains in his body.

His first coherent thought after several, long minutes of panic is to call Hannibal. He pulls his phone out of his pocket with shaky hands, seeing that he's actually missed a call from Hannibal at some point. Sniffling, he dials his number and waits for Hannibal to answer.

"Hello?" Hannibal's voice comes through the phone, like a balm to Will's anguish.

"Hannibal," He chokes out, trying and failing to sound more put together than he currently is. "I saw I missed your call."

"Are you alright?" Hannibal replies.

"'M fine." Will lies.

He hears Hannibal's sigh, knowing the older man doesn't believe him for a second. Will's voice sounds *wrecked* .

"Do you want me to come over?" Hannibal asks, and his voice is gentle, almost coaxing.

Will feels like he can breathe a little easier just from hearing the care in Hannibal's voice. He pauses before responding, letting himself get lost in the thought of having someone there with him - someone who actually cares about his well being.

"Yes," Will finally says, forcing himself to take a deep breath. "I'd like that."

Chapter End Notes

Once upon a time I wanted to go to graduate school but they won't let you in with a 2.6 GPA 😜

Hannibal

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Hannibal drops what he’s doing to get to Will as soon as possible. It’d been a while since Will had sounded so… unstable. Truthfully, Hannibal is worried. He doesn’t think Will is suicidal, but after such a life-altering trauma, one can never be sure. And he would hate to see such an undignified end for such a promising young man.

When Hannibal arrives less than fifteen minutes later, he finds Will in the exact same position as he likely was when he had called. Curled into a ball, chest heaving with silent sobs and fingers twitching against his scalp. Taking a deep breath, Hannibal walks over to Will and kneels down beside him. He reaches out to place a hand on his shoulder, but stops before making contact in case it might be too much for him at the moment.

"Will," He says softly, "it's going to be alright." His voice is soothing yet firm; something designed to break through the fog of panic that seems to have taken over Will's mind.

Watching the boy's breaths come out raggedly, Hannibal wonders if perhaps Will should be medicated. But he banishes the thought. He isn't the boy's psychiatrist, and his trauma is still very *recent* . His reactions are entirely normal, even if they are distressing.

Hannibal watches as Will forces himself to lift his heavy head, blinking through the sting of tears as he casts his gaze upwards. He meets Hannibal's soft eyes, his face betraying his concern. Will opens his mouth to speak, the corner of his lips twitching, but he seemed to think better of it, and he shut it again quickly.

He sits there for a few moments, silently, with his eyes darting around the room. Then, he moves to stand, his legs proving to be unsteadier than he clearly anticipated. Hannibal reacts quickly, standing and allowing the boy to brace himself with his forearm.

"What happened?" Hannibal asks once Will is seated on his bed.

"I ran into Randall. He tried to apologize. Poorly." Will's voice quivers with anger.

Hannibal can tell Will wants to say more. Perhaps to divulge that something else happened.

"Did he hurt you?" Hannibal asks.

"No." Will laughs dryly.

When it becomes clear that Will isn't going to say anything else on the subject, Hannibal decides to redirect the conversation to something... safer.

"Have you eaten?"

"Not since this morning." Will mumbles his answer.

"You need to eat, Will. You're too thin."

"I've been busy."

"No excuses. You need to take better care of yourself. You're coming home with me and we'll have dinner there."

Will nods. He looks tired, his eyes drooping with exhaustion. He grabs his backpack and a change of clothes and follows Hannibal outside to his waiting car. Hannibal smiles fondly at the boy when he sits in the front seat, immediately turning on the seat warmer to the highest setting. He doesn't try to engage Will in conversation, instead opting to drive home in silence. It's a short drive, anyway.

Once they arrive, Will sets his bag down on the couch and follows Hannibal to the kitchen.

"I don't require your assistance with this. Please, get comfortable in the living room, or better yet... go take a shower."

Will nods again, and Hannibal watches as the boy stands and shuffles to the bathroom, clearly opting for a shower. He's certain his shower is much better than the one found in Will's dorm. The boy could even take a bath here if he so desires.

Hannibal works quickly, having already done most of the prep work before Will had called. Once everything is plated and ready to eat, Hannibal sits at the bar, waiting for Will's return.

After only a few minutes of waiting, Will joins him in the kitchen. His hair is still damp from his shower, and his skin is flushed from the hot water, but his eyes look more peaceful than they did previously. He's wearing an oversized T-shirt and jeans that look almost as old as he is. But the boy looks magnificent in almost everything. Hannibal is preferential to seeing Will in his clothes, but he curses himself because he hadn't thought to offer the boy any today.

Giving Will his plate of food, Hannibal takes a seat in front of him and watches as he takes a few tentative bites. Will smiles and relaxes more with each bite, reminding Hannibal of why he's there in the first place - to be a friend, to be a shoulder to lean on. *And a lover* , his mind adds after a moment.

Will seems to be at peace for the time being. And Hannibal feels... unsettled. Indirectly, he was the cause of Will's breakdown. He'd pushed Randall to seek out Will. He'd wanted to know what would happen.

He really didn't think Will would have reacted this way--so poorly. He'd hoped Will would have reacted with anger, would have lashed out at Randall. But instead, the boy had collapsed in on himself and had called Hannibal for help.

Even if it didn't have the desired effect, it did seem to work to push Will even closer to Hannibal. And the boy is young. There's still time for him to truly find himself. The more Hannibal thinks about his future, the more he longs to see Will beside him. He wants to show the boy who he really is, and to have him accept him regardless of it. He can't keep it a secret forever, nor can he continue to ignore his inclinations.

What better way to get back into the swing of things than to set his sights on his next victim? Randall Tier. He'll begin preparations after Will goes back to campus.

After dinner, the pair move to the study where Will pulls out his laptop and works on an assignment for school. Hannibal has his own obligations to attend to. His entire schedule had been upheaved by the addition of Will Graham in his life, and now he feels as if he's playing perpetual catch up.

Hannibal is pulled from his work an hour later by the sound of Will's laptop lid closing, and a dramatic sigh falling from his lips.

"I'm bored." Will complains, walking over to Hannibal's desk and sitting on the edge.

Hannibal's hand twitches with desire to swat Will's ass off his desk. Nobody ever sits on his desk the way Will is. It's unspeakably *rude* . And yet, he finds it endearing when it's Will.

"It's rude to sit on people's desks, you know." Hannibal admonishes him, a playful glint in his eye.

Will chuckles and shrugs his shoulders. "I know, but I also know that you secretly enjoy it when I'm *rude* ."

Hannibal smirks, his eyes locking with Will's. "Perhaps I do. But that doesn't mean you can continue to be impolite and sit on my desk," he says, leaning in closer to the boy. "Does it?"

Will's breath hitches at the close proximity, his eyes widening as Hannibal's hand comes up to brush a strand of hair away from his face.

"I- I don't know," Will stammers, his voice barely above a whisper.

Hannibal leans in even closer, his lips just inches away from Will's ear. "Then let me show you," he murmurs, before pressing his lips to Will's neck.

Will's eyes flutter shut as a moan escapes his lips. Hannibal's hand trails down his chest, tugging at the hem of his shirt as he leans in to kiss him again. Will's hands grip onto Hannibal's shoulders, pulling him closer as he kisses him back with equal intensity.

The two break apart, panting heavily as they gaze into each other's eyes. Hannibal smirks. "Now, let's find something more entertaining to do than sitting in here, discussing *manners* ." He takes Will's hand and leads him out of the study, down the hallway, and into his bedroom.

Will is quieter once they're in the bedroom, and his eyes dart between Hannibal and the door. He looks almost afraid, like he's waiting for a good opportunity to run.

"We don't have to do anything, if you're not comfortable." Hannibal assures him.

"I want this. I want *you* . I just don't want to feel the way I did after last time." Will admits, his cheeks reddening.

"We'll do something different then, and I won't leave you like last time."

Will nods slowly. The boy's arousal is evident in his jeans and Hannibal wants to taste. Hannibal feels himself begin to salivate at the thought. He adjusts his own cock in his trousers, already hard and pushing against the fabric.

Hannibal's hand moves to the back of Will's neck and pulls him close, his lips firm against Will's own as they share a passionate kiss. His other hand settles on his waist, feeling Will shudder at the sensation.

Hannibal's hands find the hem of Will's shirt and push upward, slowly stripping him of his clothing. He eventually pulls the garment over Will's head, revealing the surprisingly well-toned chest beneath. Hannibal softly kisses each part of Will's exposed skin as he undresses him further, with each kiss feeling more desperate than the last.

Once Will is completely naked, Hannibal stares for a moment before laying him on the bed. He stands there for a few moments longer; taking in every inch of him - from his taut stomach, to the curves of his hips and thighs. To his cock, large and curved upward toward his stomach. His eyes travel up to meet Will's flushed gaze; a soft smile tugging at the corner of his lips.

Hannibal pushes him backwards, watching Will fall gently onto the bed. He makes quick work of his own shirt, and sets it on the bedside table before climbing onto Will, who instinctively opens his legs to allow Hannibal to slot between them.

" *Hannibal* ," Will breathes out, when Hannibal's clothed cock brushes against his bare one.

Hannibal licks his lips, admiring the boy beneath him. He writhes on the bed, his hips thrusting upward of their own accord, seeking friction. Hannibal, unable to deny his boy, thrusts downward, giving him what he's looking for. He ignores his own cock, still trapped in his trousers, unhappy with the paltry amount of friction it's getting with each thrust downward.

Suddenly, Hannibal slides down the bed, pushing Will's legs further apart. Hannibal takes his cock in his mouth, feeling the warmth of him and savoring the taste. His tongue laves over it, teasing and twirling until it makes Will gasp and writhe even more beneath him.

Hannibal moves his way up, lips leaving Will's cock despite the boy's moan of protest, first kissing each of Will's inner thighs before trailing upward with light kisses until his lips meet Will's. He savors the taste of Will's cock mixing with the taste of the boy's soft mouth.

When he finally returns to Will's cock, the boy shakes in pleasure, breathless moans spilling from his lips continuously. Hannibal wonders how he'd respond if he dropped lower and laved his rim with his tongue but he pushes the idea away. Will seems to be enjoying *this* more than enough.

Hannibal is good at this, having pleasured many lovers with his mouth and tongue. Admittedly, most of his partners have been women, but he's been with enough men to know what they like, and Will is no exception.

In the end, Will lasts longer than Hannibal expects him to. He doesn't suppress a groan of his own when the boy finally spills down his throat with a moan. He swallows it down and tongues at Will's overstimulated cock until he shudders and tries to push Hannibal off to avoid the discomfort of overstimulation.

Hannibal looks down at Will and feels a smile tugging at his lips. The boy is blissed out, lying bonelessly on the bed, his cock softening between his legs. He is *gorgeous* . A work of art. Hannibal wants to draw him, just like this.

He dresses Will, despite the boy's protests at being maneuvered, in a pair of his boxers and a soft, gray T-shirt. Much better than the one he'd been dressed in earlier. He makes a mental note to himself to buy Will some clothes that don't look as old as he is–perhaps tomorrow. He changes clothes too and gets into bed with Will. Unwilling to leave the boy for any length of time like he had last time. Will isn't going to feel abandoned when he wakes.

Chapter End Notes

I don't know anything about food so this is me skirting past that part of my fics

Will

“I really don’t think this is necessary,” Will complains.

When he’d woken up in Hannibal’s arms this morning, he hadn’t expected they’d be here, at a shopping mall. Not only does the concept seem beneath someone like Hannibal, but it’s also *expensive* . Will doesn’t have a job, and he can’t afford a single item in the place.

It’s been so long since he’s been in a mall, he’d almost forgotten how overwhelming the experience is. Children screaming, loud music blaring over the speakers, and so many people packed into one space that he can’t help but brush up against total strangers. When Hannibal leads him into a store, thankfully a less crowded one, he breathes a sigh of relief. The music inside is at a much lower volume than what they play throughout the mall and he’s more than a little appreciative.

His eyes scan the area, and he walks to the side containing denim jeans. He has 2 pairs currently and they’re both old and worn. He’d gotten them secondhand so there’s no way to really tell how old they actually are, but the tags have worn so much he can't even read the sizes on them anymore.

He has a third pair of equally worn jeans, but those stay in the back of his closet now. He'd been wearing them the night he was assaulted and he can't bring himself to look at them, let alone *wear* them even though Hannibal had washed them and returned them to him.

His fingers tentatively reach out and brush the denim. It’s soft and feels nice against his fingers. It feels so much better than his jeans, and even better than the jeans he allows himself to look at in discount stores. He knows these must be outrageously expensive.

And they are. When he sees the price, he feels his throat constrict painfully. He doesn’t think he’ll *ever* be able to afford something like that. *Two hundred dollars* for jeans! He pulls his hand away as if he’s been burned. He whips around, to see Hannibal standing there, just watching him.

“I hadn’t really intended to buy you jeans… but do you like those?” He asks, head cocked slightly to the left.

“You can’t buy me this. You can’t buy me anything in this store. It’s too *expensive* !” Will whispers, eyes wide.

"You need new clothes, Will."

"No, I don't." Will gulps, trying not to let his desperation show. He knows he looks like a scruffy street kid, but it's all he can afford.

"Yes, you do. Come on, these jeans will look lovely on you. Pick out two or three more pairs you like. You can't go around wearing the same clothes forever."

Will bites his lip, not wanting to push his luck. But he finds himself unable to resist the temptation. Selecting a few pairs he likes, he makes his way to the fitting rooms. He takes off his old, beat-up jeans and tries on the ones he'd been looking at first. They fit perfectly, like they'd been made with him in mind.

Will blushes, knowing that's not the case. He turns around to look at himself in the mirror. He looks *good* . The jeans hug his ass in all the right places and he wonders what Hannibal will think. He decides to step out of the fitting room to show the older man, but he isn't there. Will looks around anxiously. He gets the feeling this must be how children feel when they've lost their parents at the grocery store. The comparison makes him laugh to himself.

Suddenly Hannibal is there, standing in front of him with a few shirts in his outstretched arm.

"I've guessed your size. Will you try these on?" Hannibal asks, as if Will would be doing him a huge favor.

"I--yes," Will stammers, taking the garments. He doesn't even know how much the shirts cost. The jeans are already too expensive.

"Those jeans look... *wonderful* on you." Hannibal says, his eyes unabashedly falling to Will's ass.

Will sees the way Hannibal's pupils dilate with lust and it makes him swallow audibly, his throat clicking as he does so. Knowing Hannibal finds him attractive in the jeans makes his own cock stir in them. Returning to the fitting room, he shakes his head and looks down to his now half-hard cock. Before he met Hannibal, he doesn't recall arousal being such a *staple* in his life.

He shucks off the jeans and tries on the remaining two pairs. They both fit the way the first had, and he tries not to think of how much all of these clothes will cost. But his brain won't let him forget it. The jeans alone will be somewhere around six hundred dollars. The idea nauseates him.

He picks up the first shirt, reading the price tag. One hundred and ten dollars.

he shakes his head in disbelief, wondering why anyone would spend so much on clothing. But he knows why. This shirt is the softest material he's ever felt and he can only imagine what it will feel like on his body. Dressed in a black pair of jeans that hug his hips and ass, and in the shirt that falls perfectly on his lithe frame, he comes out to show Hannibal the clothes.

Hannibal is there this time, waiting. Will sees the older man suck in a breath, looking Will up and down.

" *Beautiful* ," Hannibal whispers reverently.

The compliment makes Will blush profusely and look down nervously at his shoes. The shoes that look entirely out of place with the rest of his clothing now. His sneakers are old, the soles held to the rest of the shoe with super glue. They're threadbare at his toes and

there'll likely be holes there sooner or later. Hannibal's eyes seem to track his own, and Will cringes, knowing he's seen the state of his shoes, too.

Will turns to get back to the fitting room, but Hannibal reaches out and grabs his arm. Will spins around to face him once more, eyes widened.

Hannibal places a kiss on Will's lips, nibbling at his lower lip in the process. It makes Will's stomach flip with arousal and surprise. He struggles to hold back the moan in his throat.

Breaking the kiss, Hannibal smirks, "Go change."

Will nods, turning and making his way into the fitting room once more, still dazed from the kiss. He wasn't sure if Hannibal would be okay with public displays of affection, but Hannibal had answered his question without him even asking it. The man seems particularly intuitive in that way.

As Will takes off his new clothes, he groans inwardly at the obvious state of arousal that has befallen him *again* . He looks down at it with a 'you've got to be kidding me' expression and shakes his head in disbelief. Just from a single kiss? Hannibal clearly knows what effect he has on Will.

Inside the fitting room, his mind drifts. He's done his best to keep his intrusive thoughts at bay, but he can't seem to forget the way he'd felt after seeing Randall. About how he'd felt imaging the man dying by his hands. It nauseates him, and makes his inconvenient erection flag. He thinks about opening up to Hannibal about the issue, but something always seems to hold him back. Would the man judge him for his *desires* or would he still look at him the same way? Regardless, he's yet to have the chance to talk about it because they'd been so busy today.

Taking the new clothes up front, Will intentionally zones out as Hannibal checks out. He doesn't want to know how much he's costing his boyfriend. Instead, he looks at a rack of belts. All soft leather in varying black, brown, and gray colors. He won't need a belt for his new clothes since they actually fit properly, he thinks smiling to himself.

He pointedly tries to ignore the other thoughts he has about belts. He's never liked them. Having been hit by them as a child, the negative association seems to have followed him into adulthood. He doesn't think he wants a family of his own, but if he did, he knows he'd never use these instruments on his children.

Unaware of the obvious frown on his face, Hannibal startles him by asking him, "Are you alright?"

"Oh, yes. I-I'm fine." Will stutters in reply, tearing his gaze from the belts.

"Do you need a belt?" Hannibal asks.

"No!" Will replies emphatically.

"Forget that I asked." Hannibal replies, brows furrowed.

"It's not that," Will tries to explain, "I don't like them." He can feel his face heat up with the confession.

Hannibal eyes him skeptically and Will looks away, face drawn into a frown. He bites his lip, waiting for Hannibal to either call him out or let it go. However, what he isn't expecting is for Hannibal to smile and announce that they're going to buy him a new pair of shoes.

Will blinks in surprise at the sudden change of subject and offers a hesitant reply of "Are you sure?"

What he doesn't say is that Hannibal has already spent far too much money on him today, and there's no way Will can pay him back in the foreseeable future. He feels like a burden, a leech on Hannibal's resources. Even more so when he remembers the very expensive cell phone in his pocket. Nonetheless, he stays quiet about it because Hannibal always shuts him down.

He can't be a leech if he's not asking for any of this, right? He reasons with himself, his stomach twisting with anxiety.

Hannibal doesn't seem like the type of person to even own a pair of sneakers (or jeans, for that matter), so Will is once again surprised when they walk into a store that specializes in sneakers. Will is grateful for Hannibal's lack of insistence that he dress the same way he does. Will's skin itches at the mere idea of dressing in suits, button-up shirts, and freshly polished, fancy shoes all the time. Loafers? Oxford shoes? He's really not even sure what they're called.

They leave the store with two new pairs of shoes and several pairs of socks. Hannibal had insisted on them after getting a look at Will's threadbare socks. They were clean, but that's all they had going for them. Will's face had flushed in embarrassment. He's never stopped to think he might need to be worried about the state of his *socks* .

"How much..." Will begins, then pauses, swallowing thickly, "How much do I owe you?"

"Nothing, my sweet boy." Hannibal replies, his expression feline. Will half expects the man to start purring.

"I don't understand why you're spending all this money on *me* ." Will admits miserably.

Hannibal's voice is tender as he looks deeply into Will's eyes. His hands cup his face, thumbs caressing his cheeks. "You say that as if you're not worth it," he murmured. "But you are. You're priceless to me. I'd give you the entire universe if I could do it."

Hannibal

Chapter Notes

Sorry for going MIA. My brain hasn't been cooperating lately.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Several days after he and Will's shopping trip, Hannibal has his next appointment with Randall.

“Randall, how are you?” Hannibal asks, sitting across from the man for his second session.

“Not great, really.” Randall replies, frowning.

"Did you speak with your previous roommate?"

"I tried. Didn't go well."

"Perhaps it failed because you refuse to face your prejudice. Your roommate likely found you to be insincere."

Randall looks torn, it's clear he's still not sleeping well and his clothes look as crumpled as ever. He runs a nervous hand through his overgrown hair and sighs, "My parents were very religious. They sent me to conversion therapy when they found me looking at pornography."

"Pornography?" Hannibal inquires, pressing for further details.

" *Same-sex* pornography. I suffered from same-sex attraction as a teen."

Hannibal purses his lips. His treatment of Will makes much more sense now. Still inexcusable, but Hannibal can empathize.

"Do you feel that conversion therapy... *cured* you?" Hannibal asks, attempting to hide his disdain for the cruel practice in his voice.

The obvious response to Hannibal's query should be a resounding no. Conversion therapy has no scientific basis and its application can cause tremendous suffering. It doesn't matter which type Randall underwent—all of it is barbaric in different ways. This experience is probably why he harbors such intense animosity towards anyone who identifies as anything other than heterosexual, despite the fact that he himself is gay.

"Of course it did." Randall replies, almost confidently.

"If it had, why do you hold so much disdain for your roommate?" Hannibal asks.

"I think of myself as more of a recovering addict than anything else. Being exposed to that... *lifestyle* might make me relapse." Randall explains.

"So, you aren't cured then. You consider yourself to be in recovery?"

"Yeah, I guess so."

"Would I be correct in the assumption that you wouldn't even entertain the idea that sexual orientation isn't a disease to be cured?"

"Yes. It's... it's *ungodly* !" Randall growls.

"All reputable scientific associations have denounced the practice of conversion therapy and none consider homosexuality to be a disease. It was removed from the DSM in 1973."

"I don't really care what the *science* says. It's an abomination in God's eyes."

Randall's voice takes a defensive tone. It's unclear whether he's trying to convince Hannibal of it or if he's trying to convince himself.

Hannibal studies Randall for a moment before deciding to change the subject. Maybe pushing the issue will only make him more entrenched in his beliefs.

"Randall, have you ever heard of the concept of primal therapy?" Hannibal asks, leaning back in his chair.

"No, I haven't." Randall replies, looking genuinely curious.

"It's a form of psychotherapy that involves revisiting and re-experiencing early emotional traumas in order to resolve them. It's based on the idea that unresolved traumas are the root of all mental illness."

Randall furrows his brows. "That... sounds intense."

"It can be," Hannibal agrees. "But it's incredibly effective. I've been employed in facilities that use this technique, with great success. It's particularly useful for individuals who suffer from anxiety, depression, and self-esteem issues. It could also help you deal with your feelings around conversion therapy."

"I-I'll have to think about it." Randall replies, looking pensive. "But I don't have any negative associations with my conversion therapy."

Hannibal shakes his head in disagreement. "If that were true, you wouldn't have lashed out at your roommate and left him to potentially be seriously injured."

They continue to talk, with Hannibal occasionally steering the conversation back towards primal therapy, planting seeds in Randall's mind. Hannibal is already working out a plan in his head, a way to use this man's trauma to his advantage. He's always been particularly skilled at identifying vulnerable individuals and exploiting them.

To reinsert Randall into his emotional turmoil via primal therapy is to make him volatile. And Randall is already like a pot about to boil over. Hannibal reminds himself to remain vigilant. He would like to see Will embrace his darkness, but he doesn't wish for the boy to be harmed in the process.

Hannibal begins to lead Randall through the first step of primal therapy; regression.

"How old were you when you were first exposed to conversion therapy?"

"Thirteen."

"Did your parents send you away or was it an outpatient treatment center?"

"They--they sent me away. I was gone, separated from my friends and family for six months." Randall replies, his voice shaking and his lip quivering.

"What emotions are you feeling right now?"

"Anger. They *betrayed* me. My parents should have helped me. Not send me away." Randall growls.

Watching Randall come apart at the seams is enthralling. The man across from him is trembling uncontrollably, his fingers clawing at the armrests until his knuckles are stark white. He squeezes his eyes shut and grits his teeth as he draws in a sharp breath; beads of sweat trickle down his face as the tension in the room becomes almost palpable.

Hannibal is quiet, watching the scene unfold. These moments have always been sublime. To know that he wields the power to put people back together or to make them crumble excites him. The quiet sense of power is heady, like nothing else he experiences in his day to day life.

Randall, still in the thralls of his emotional flashback, finally cracks his eyes open to look at Hannibal, who pointedly checks his watch.

"I'm afraid that's all we have time for today. I will see you for your session next week." Hannibal says, feigning displeasure.

Randall jumps out of his seat with a start and hastily snatches his coat. His limbs quiver with nervous energy as he makes for the door, seemingly almost afraid to move since the implications of what had just transpired have cast a pallor over him. His shoulders hang heavy with the burden of the session, and in that moment Hannibal is sure he feels worse off than he ever has before. Randall can barely look him in the eye, the weight of the emotional turmoil that rests on his chest obvious in his pained expression.

Chapter End Notes

Giving everyone trauma is my favorite thing to do

Will

Chapter Notes

> I am still writing! I just keep having new ideas so I have another fic in the works (plus two(?) others that need to be updated lol)

Will lays in bed heaving, feeling like an empty void had opened up inside of him, having woken up sweat-drenched from another nightmare so vivid it seems to be almost indistinguishable from reality.

He’s too exhausted to speak to anyone, even Hannibal. He's never been particularly outgoing, but he had a strong desire to talk to Hannibal that usually kept him somewhat sociable, at least in respect to the older man. Now, though, he feels as if his voice is gone and he can't even muster a single word if he tried. His phone is forgotten on the floor, texts from Hannibal and Alana sitting unanswered.

He reaches for his phone as it begins to vibrate once more. The gentle buzzing of the device against the hard tile floor brings forth a wave of mixed emotions, the strongest of which is nausea. He wants to ignore it but also yearns to speak to Hannibal. A heaviness weighs down his chest, suffocating him. His throat closes and tears prick the corners of his eyes. He feels as if he's been dropped into an icy lake, the pain of missing Hannibal washing over him.

But his mind is so consumed by his intrusive thoughts he doesn't know how he's supposed to talk to anyone without spilling *everything* . There's room for little else inside his head, though thoughts of Hannibal always seem to cut their way through the fog of his mind. In his dreams, Hannibal is there sometimes. The man smiles down at him, as if he's proud of what Will's done to Randall.

When he wakes from those dreams specifically, it makes him sick. He feels as if he's violated Hannibal somehow by subconsciously casting him in the role of the proud audience. Hannibal would look at him with disgust, *disdain* . He wouldn't be *proud* , and he certainly wouldn't be smiling.

Oftentimes, when Will awakens, he believes for a split second that he's actually done it. That he's actually killed Randall. His dreams, his *fantasies* are so realistic, it's hard to distinguish them from reality. He feels like he's going crazy.

Wiping the sweat that's gathered on his forehead away, he notices his head feels warm. He wonders briefly if perhaps he isn't going *insane* and he's just *sick* . But he shoves the thought away, knowing it's unlikely. An illness wouldn't make him fantasize about killing. And that's what it is, isn't it? A fantasy.

He's reluctant to admit it to even himself, but when he dreams of killing Randall and Hannibal is there, he often wakes up unbearably aroused. His cock so hard it aches with the need for release, but his body's reaction only works to nauseate him further.

Gripping his sweat-drenched clothes tightly in his fists, he stumbles towards the shower, eager to wash away the torrent of thoughts that plague him. He shucks off his boxers and steps beneath the scalding hot spray, feeling it burn like a thousand needles against his skin. The steam rises around him and he stands beneath the water until the heat seeps into every pore, coloring his body a deep, angry red. For a few moments, his mind goes silent.

He steps out of the shower, a wave of exhaustion washing over him. Wrapping a towel around himself, he trudges to his bed and lays down. He closes his eyes and he's instantly overcome by a wave of comfortable exhaustion. Never mind the fact he's just woken up. As he loses consciousness, he vaguely wonders once more if there is something wrong with him *physically* rather than psychologically.

He continues like that, in a haze of fevered illness for three weeks, staying inside his dorm room and only leaving to go to class. He convinces himself he has the flu, but the lost time and vivid dreams seem to suggest otherwise. He knows it can’t be the flu when his dreams leech into his reality.

The last thing he remembers one evening is sitting at his desk, staring at his notes for physics. And then, he’s in the forest by campus. His hands are dirty, mud caked beneath his nails, and he’s clad in only his boxers. He frantically checks himself for injuries or blood, or anything to indicate he’s done something terrible, but finds no evidence. There’s no one around, and he doesn’t have his phone on him either. So he has no choice but to make his way back to his dorm in the state he’s in.

The walk back to his dorm is thankfully uneventful, with no students being out and about at the late hour. When he gets back, he takes a shower. When he gets out, he looks at himself in the mirror, staring at the man he’s become. He barely recognizes himself.

He gasps, a scream lodged in his throat, when he sees a tall, shadowy figure behind him in the mirror. It has no identifying features, aside from a pair of long, sharp antlers and white eyes. But when he turns around, the figure is gone. He heaves out uneven breaths, trying to calm down. But the more he thinks about it, the more he realizes this can’t just be the flu. There’s *got* to be something wrong with him.

He does text Hannibal occasionally but declines all invitations to see the older man, stating that he still has the flu. He feels like his secret is weighing him down so heavily that if he speaks to anyone, it’ll be ripped from his chest and through his mouth against his will, so he keeps their conversation limited to text. It’s clear to Will that the man has become increasingly concerned with Will’s wellbeing, but he can’t face him. He considers that Hannibal leaving him might be for the best. He doesn’t want to drag Hannibal down during his descent into madness.

The next day, he is sitting in his dorm room when a loud knock sounds from the door. He hesitates before rising to his feet and opening the door. Standing there is Hannibal, dressed in an unbuttoned gray coat with an oxblood scarf draped around his neck. His apathetic façade

almost slips and Will can tell that he’s been worried sick, but he offers no explanation as to why he has come to see Will unannounced. Instead, he hands Will a container filled with some kind of pasta.

"What are you doing here?" Will asks, brows knitting together.

"You've been terribly distant for the last three weeks. I was becoming concerned." Hannibal admits.

"I'm--I'm fine." Will answers pathetically. Anyone with eyes can see he's not fine. He's lost weight and his face is impossibly pale, almost ghostly white in color. He hasn't been grooming himself and his beard has grown in and become unkempt, not to mention the bags beneath his eyes are so severe, they look like bruises.

Hannibal steps closer then, making Will take an instinctual step back. He looks up at him through his hair and breathes heavily. Anxious in a way he's never been around Hannibal. With the way his dreams have begun to span his reality, he's no longer sure if this is real, or even if it's actually Hannibal who's in front of him.

When Hannibal's hand touches his cheek softly, he bites back a whine. It's been too long since he's been touched and he *misses* it. Misses Hannibal. Deciding to assume this is real, he steps forward and crumples into Hannibal's arms, surprising the older man.

"Will, you're burning up." Hannibal says, frowning.

"I told you, I've had the flu." Will replies, his voice muffled by his current position of his face pressed into Hannibal's chest.

Will pulls back after he hears Hannibal's sharp intake of breath.

Incredulously, he asks, "did you just *smell* me?"

Hannibal nods, "difficult to avoid."

"You can just say I smell like shit, you know." Will deadpans.

"You do have somewhat of an odor, but I smell something else on you. A fevered sweetness, with heat. You need to see a doctor."

"You're a doctor, I'm seeing you right now." Will quips, forcing a smile.

Hannibal eyeballs him with a repudiating look. "Have you been having any other symptoms aside from flu-like symptoms?"

Will feels himself heat up, a flush of embarrassment coursing through his body. He turns away, but Hannibal takes a gentle hold of his chin to turn him back around. "You can tell me," he whispers softly, almost imploringly.

Will takes a deep breath before finally whispering out the fact that he's had strange dreams and hallucinations for the past couple weeks. That sometimes it's difficult to tell if he's awake

or asleep, that sometimes reality and dreams seem to mingle together until even Will isn't sure what is real anymore.

"And sometimes I lose time. I'm in one place one minute and the next I'm in the woods and three hours have passed." He finally admits.

"I'm going to give Dr. Sutcliffe a call. He's a neurologist at the university's hospital. He's one of the best."
Knowing he can't say no, knowing that he *needs* help, Will nods and agrees to see the doctor.

Hannibal

Hannibal had been so busy he hadn't had the chance to check up on Will as often as he'd have liked. When the boy began declining all of his invitations, he'd realized something must be wrong. He is no empath, but he can almost *feel* how much Will cares for him. The boy wouldn't just ignore him. Not unless something was wrong.

Will told him he had the flu, and Hannibal was content to believe that for a week or two. But when the illness continued and Will became increasingly more isolated, Hannibal knew something was wrong.

He'd worried for a moment, when Randall suddenly cancelled his next therapy appointment, that something had happened to Will. Unable to quell his concern, he made his way to campus and showed up at Will's door unannounced.

That's how he ended up with Will passed out in the passenger's seat of his Bentley and on their way to see Dr. Sutcliffe. Once they arrive, it takes one look from Dr. Sutcliffe to have Will admitted into the hospital. He'd feebly tried to wave off their concerns, saying he didn't need to be admitted, but it was a lie and everyone knew it.

Hannibal remains at his side, having listed himself as Will's emergency contact when they'd been in the hospital before. The chair he's sitting in is not merciful on his back, and it works to remind him he's not as young as he used to be.

The thought of his own mortality barely crosses his mind. In some ways, he feels invincible and believes that he'll be remembered forever. The idea of being forgotten is too much to bear, and so he holds onto the belief that his name will last for eternity. His legacy is bathed in blood, and before he dies, he wants everyone to know he's the Chesapeake Ripper. He can picture it, his murders in the textbooks. His tableaus discussed in the halls of the FBI. The notoriety he'll have in death pales anything he has made for himself in life.

Will is roused from sleep for the fourth time by a nurse wanting to take more blood from him. Hannibal watches, his hand resting over Will's as the nurse finishes her task.

"They clearly don't value restful sleep here," Will quips, cracking a half-smile.

"Apparently not." Hannibal agrees.

Will sits up in the bed, clearly having given up on sleeping. Hannibal observes his boy, the way his chest rises and falls in the hospital gown he has on. His breathing is fast, and when Will isn't distracted or sleeping, the anxiety comes off him in waves. With Hannibal's heightened senses, he can almost *smell* it coming off the boy.

Lost in thought, Hannibal is roused by Will trying to get out of bed. The back of his hospital gown is open, and his ass is on display.

"I fuckin' hate these things," Will grumbles, a hint of his southern accent coming through, as he fists his gown and tries to preserve some sense of modesty.

Hannibal watches, ready to assist as Will makes his way to the attached bathroom. His anxiety is unwarranted. Will hasn't been unsteady on his feet during the course of this illness. He's not a fall risk. Nonetheless, he listens intently for the first signs of trouble behind the closed door. At least it doesn't lock.

When the bathroom door opens again, Will's eyes are wide. He looks like a man who is doing everything he can trying not to cry.

Hannibal stands, ready to pull Will into his arms, but Will takes a step back instead and shakes his head. His face pales and he grasps onto the edge of the bed.

"Will?" Hannibal takes a step forward. "What is it?"

"Head hurts," Will says through gritted teeth.

Before Hannibal can question him further, there's a knock at the door.

Dr. Sutcliffe enters the room and quickly scans over them both with his eyes before coming over to stand at the foot of Will’s bed. His expression is dire, making it clear he has bad news for them both.

“I’m afraid I have to recommend an MRI for Will," he says solemnly. "His symptoms just don't match anything I'm familiar with—we need more information before we can make any definitive conclusions."

Hannibal had expected as much. He'd have opted for an MRI right away given Will's condition, but he's not capable of being impartial when it comes to Will. He wants the best for him. None of the 'wait and see' nonsense most doctors employ. He'd been one of those doctors, once, he reminds himself.

A few moments later, a nurse enters the room to take Will down for his MRI. Hannibal stands up and lingers for a few seconds, watching as Will is wheeled out of the room.

As he makes his way down the hall, Hannibal can't help but replay the events of the past few weeks in his head. Will's strange dreams and hallucinations, the lost time, and now this excruciating headache. He knows something is seriously wrong with Will, and he'll do whatever it takes to make sure he gets the help he needs.

It's not long before Will is back in the room, and Hannibal can tell just by looking at him that the MRI has taken a toll on his already weakened state. "How are you feeling?" Hannibal asks, concern lacing his voice.

Will doesn't answer right away, simply sinking back into the bed and covering his eyes with his arm. Hannibal takes that as his cue to sit down in the chair next to the bed once again.

As hours pass, the doctors come and go, poking and prodding at Will as they try to figure out what's wrong. Hannibal watches it all with a steely determination, determined to see Will

through this and to find a way to make him well again.

Finally, the doctors come in with their diagnosis. It's not good news, but it could be worse.

"Mr. Graham," Dr. Sutcliffe begins, his voice grave. "We've examined your MRI results and conducted further tests. Our findings suggest you're suffering from a form of encephalitis."

"Swelling of the brain?" Will asks.

"Exactly. I'd like to take a sample of cerebrospinal fluid to assist in determining the type. Once we know what's causing it, the better we can treat it."

Will agrees, and soon he's whisked away once more, leaving Hannibal to wait.

Once he returns, the lab calls with the results quickly. Will has Anti-NMDAR encephalitis and Dr. Sutcliffe is surprised he is still up and walking around, given how long he's been symptomatic. They start him on aggressive IV steroids and plasma exchange.

Will isn't happy about being confined to his bed. He's even more upset at the prospect of using a plastic urinal, and so he declines it the first two times he's asked if he needs to go to the bathroom by the well meaning nurse who is assigned to his room.

"How much longer am I going to be stuck here?" Will asks, though it sounds more like a whine.

It seems being ill has made Will behave more like a child than Hannibal has ever seen. Nonetheless, Hannibal looks at his watch.

"Two more hours or so, I'd say." Hannibal answers.

Will sighs loudly, clearly unhappy with the news and shifts in the bed, careful not to jostle the tubes coming from each arm. Seemingly unable to sit still, Will continues adjusting himself in bed and the sound of the sheets moving beneath him begin to grate at Hannibal's nerves.

"Are you alright? The way you're moving over there is making *me* antsy."

Will grumbles something unintelligible, and Hannibal assumes he's starting to feel the effects of the treatments. Just then, the nurse returns to the room and offers Will the plastic urinal again.

He finally accepts it, and sheepishly asks Hannibal to turn away from him while he uses it. When he's done, the nurse takes the urinal away to dispose of it appropriately.

When Will is done with his plasma exchange therapy, he is discharged. The rest of his care can be done in an outpatient setting, as long as he won't be staying alone. Hannibal volunteers before Will can even utter a word in protest.

He doesn't like not having the boy close, and yet Will has always maintained his own space, in his own dorm, even given how unsafe he feels there at times. Hannibal wants to influence the boy to move in with him, but it doesn't seem that Will has even considered the idea.

On their way home, Will speaks up about something that's clearly been bothering him.

"I didn't want to say anything, especially not at the hospital, but the hallucinations and dreams I've been having--they're really *violent* , and scary."

Will

Will’s throat threatens to close up. He can’t believe he’s uttered those words. The very thing he’d sworn himself to secrecy about. But he knows if he keeps it in, he’ll go insane. Someone needs to know. Maybe he needs to be locked up somewhere. Sealed behind the bars of an insane asylum where he can’t hurt anyone. But he *hasn’t* hurt anyone. He’s only thought about it, dreamed about it, *hallucinated* it.

"Tell me more about the dreams." Hannibal prods gently.

"I'm hurting Randall, *killing* him." Will admits, feeling his chest constrict painfully.

Hannibal's brow furrows in concern, but his voice remains soft. "And how do you feel when you have these dreams?"

"Powerful," Will admits, his voice barely above a whisper. "Like I have control over life and death."

Hannibal nods, understanding the appeal of such thoughts. He's certainly had them himself, and revels in making them a reality. "And what about the hallucinations?"

Will shudders at the mention of them. "They're so real," he says, his voice shaking slightly. "I see myself doing horrible things. It's like living in a nightmare."

"I think it's time we talk about your past," Hannibal says, his voice serious. "There are things we need to sort through, things that may be causing these thoughts and emotions."

Will freezes, his entire body tensing. "I don't want to talk about that," he says, his voice tight. "I'm fine. It must have been the encephalitis."

"You and I both know that's not true. At most, the encephalitis only exacerbated your violent thoughts. They were there to begin with." Hannibal says to him with a reproachful tone.

"If this is because of my assault, why is it only Randall?" Will asks.

"Do you know what the other assailants look like? Do you know their names?"

"Not really. It was dark, and most of the time my face was pressed against the wall. Not a whole lot of opportunity to study their faces."

"On top of that, do you hold them responsible for what happened, or do you place most of the blame on Randall?"

" *They're* the ones who assaulted me." Will says, pausing before continuing. "But Randall left me there. It wouldn't have happened if he'd have let me ride back to campus with him."

"So in a roundabout way, you do hold him responsible, even more than the men who did the actual harm."

"I guess so, yeah." Will mumbles, breathing a sigh of relief to see they've arrived at Hannibal's and can put the rest of this conversation on hold for the time being.

Will stumbles as he tries to get out of the car on his own. He's still far from better--his brain still on fire in a way that makes even the simplest tasks nearly impossible. He groans when Hannibal's broad form holds him up and helps him into the house. He hates feeling so helpless.

Hannibal lays him down on the couch, pulling a throw blanket over his noticeably skinnier form. Will suppresses a shiver, wondering if he still has a fever despite the treatments in the hospital.

Hannibal takes a seat beside Will, his hand on the younger man's forehead. "You're still warm," he notes. "I'll get you some water and your medication."

Will nods, his eyes drooping with exhaustion. He watches Hannibal's form pad into the kitchen, and begins to feel an ache in his chest. He knows he shouldn't be sharing any of this with Hannibal--it only makes him feel more vulnerable, more like a helpless child (or, more appropriately, a *monster*). But there's something about Hannibal that makes it feel like he can't keep any secrets from him.

When Hannibal returns, Will takes the pills and the water gratefully. Hannibal takes a seat beside him, his hand resting on Will's shoulder. "You don't have to hide anything from me, Will." he says, his voice soft. "I know you think I'll judge you, but I won't. I just want to help."

"I don't want to hurt anyone, Hannibal." Will admits, his voice trembling. "But these feelings, these violent thoughts--they're so real. And I can't control them."

"I've struggled with my own dark thoughts, Will. I suppose I've never told you much about my family, about my younger sister." Hannibal says with a sigh.

"I didn't even know you had a younger sister." Will admits, worried it's something he was told and then forgot.

"Her name was Mischa."

"Was?"

"She did when she was very young. She was murdered." Hannibal admits. "For years, I imagined what I would do to her killers. I spent years focusing on that notion of retribution. I thought of little else."

Will looks at Hannibal, seeing the way the man's face forms a wall. As if he's hiding something. Like maybe he isn't telling the whole truth. But Will is in no position to call him out on it and the admission was obviously a painful one. He shouldn't poke at the wound further.

Instead of asking him about it further, he changes direction just a little, "How did you let go of those feelings?"

"I didn't do it alone. My aunt was crucial in my recovery. She reminded me of my humanity."

Will, once more, picks up on something else Hannibal isn't sharing. There's pain below the surface, perhaps inflicted by his aunt. It makes Will's chest ache, allowing him to momentarily forget his own turmoil.

"I'd like to be that for you, Will."

"Thank you." Will replies, exhaustion setting into his bones.

He barely notices it when Hannibal's phone rings and the man steps away into the kitchen. After some time, he returns, sitting next to Will once more. He strokes his fingers through Will's unruly curls and kisses him on the forehead.

"There's something that requires my immediate attention that I must take care of. I'll return shortly."

Will mumbles his understanding and turns away from Hannibal. He wants to tell the man to stay, but the words won't come out of his throat, so he just groans and allows sleep to take him. In his half-conscious state, he hears Hannibal's footsteps retreat towards the door, and then the last sound he picks up is the front door shutting gently behind him.

A few hours pass, and Will's eyes crack open at the sound of the front door being forced open. He hears the wood of the frame crack as it breaks and hits the floor. Thankfully feeling better than he had earlier, he gets up but finds he's torn between investigating the noise or hiding from it. He stands, his feet cemented to their spot on the floor as he hears someone breach the door and make their way into the house.

The intruder is *growling* as he makes his way toward the living room. It sounds inhuman, and if it weren't for the footsteps belonging to someone definitely bipedal, he'd have entertained the idea that the intruder was some kind of *animal* .

Will's heart beats rapidly, pounding so hard he hears it in his ears. He isn't in any kind of condition for a fight. Not that he was overly strong before, but three weeks practically being bedridden has done no favors for his muscle tone. The steps belong to someone larger than him, broader. He whips his head around frantically, searching for something he can use as a weapon. He glances to his phone across the room, but shakes his head. He doesn't have time to make a phone call.

Will spots an ornate iron fire poker. It's adorned with a stag's head near the top, the antlers sharp and pointed, like the end of the poker. He grabs the improvised weapon in his hands, then squats to hide behind the couch. Maybe whoever has broken in will steal some things and just leave.

Will covers his mouth to suppress a yelp as the intruder comes into the living room, knocking a lamp off the table near where he's hiding. The glass shatters, some of it landing next to

Will.

"Dr. Lecter! Where are you?" The intruder calls out.

Will recognizes that voice. How could he forget it? It's Randall. Without thinking, Will stands up, swaying on his feet slightly. Maybe he can talk to Randall.

"He isn't--he isn't here." Will says, trying and failing to sound confident. His hand tightens around the iron poker.

Randall turns, his eyes changing when he sees Will, *"You."* he growls.

"Are you and Dr. Lecter working together to make my life a living hell?" Randall spits.

"I don't," Will pauses, stepping back as Randall approaches, "I don't know what you're talking about."

"The good doctor's fucked up brand of *therapy* . It was like he wants me to get worse instead of better! I didn't realize what he was doing at first, but then it hit me. He was punishing me for what I did to you. I didn't think he knew you personally, but he must if you're in his house."

Will's confusion is written all over his face. He had no idea that Randall and Hannibal knew each other, no idea that Randall was Hannibal's *patient* . If he wasn't worried that Randall was about to rip him to shreds, he'd be angry with Hannibal for keeping this from him. The feeling of betrayal has to wait, he realizes as the other man stalks toward him.

Will's hands shake as they hold the iron poker, from both fear and exhaustion. Randall closes in on Will, who then drops the poker in panic. He realizes his mistake when he hears the metal object hit the ground. Randall bodily slams him against the wall, making it shake. Will is vaguely aware of the shattering of various wall hangings falling to the ground. He cringes, both from the pain of colliding with the wall and the sounds of things being broken.

In his dazed state, he finds himself worrying that Hannibal will be upset about the broken things. As if finding him dead in the living room would be little more than a second thought. He falls to the floor, his knees smacking hard against the wooden floor. He isn't left alone to feel it, because Randall grabs him by his shirt collar and slams him against the wall again.

With all the air forced from his lungs, Will feels as if he's suffocating.

"Randall, please," He wheezes, scratching at the man's hands pressing him against the wall.

"Is that what you sound like when he fucks you?" Randall taunts, his teeth glinting in a predatory smile.

Will's reply is drowned out by a low growl coming from the doorway, followed by a figure stepping into the living room.

"Randall!" Hannibal snapped, his face contorted with anger. "You will not hurt him!"

Will stares over at Hannibal in shock and gratitude, relieved to see his savior, but afraid that things would take an even more violent turn.

As Hannibal approaches, Randall steps back and pulls out a small switchblade. He points it at Will as he edges towards the door.

Hannibal stops dead in his tracks and takes a deep breath to steady himself. In that moment he seemed like an entirely different man: anger emanating off of him like fire and smoke, eyes flaring with deadly intent.

He moves forward and barks one command at Randall: "Put the knife down."

Randall gives an emboldened smirk as he keeps the blade trained on Will's throat. With every movement of Randall's hand closer to his skin, Will feels his heart sinking further and further into despair.

As Will gasps for breath, his eyes focus on the poker that lies abandoned near his feet. In one swift movement, before Randall is aware of it, Will dives for it and swings the iron rod in front of him in a wide arc. He hears Randall’s shocked gasp as the poker connects with his ribs and he recoils slightly from its force, his switchblade falling from his hand.

With the upper hand, Will leaps forward and tackles Randall to the ground. He reaches for the man's abandoned switch blade and presses the cool metal against his neck hard enough to make him bleed sluggishly from his neck.

Will has all but forgotten Hannibal's presence as he presses the blade down harder, listening to Randall's whimpers. He feels powerful, just like the way he'd imagined he would. Randall's feeble attempts to push Will off him are futile. Will's focus is solid, and the adrenaline rushing through his veins is giving him more strength than he has even when he isn't ill.

Wet gurgling comes from Randall's open mouth as the blade is driven further into his neck. Bright red blood begins making its way out of his mouth and running down the side of his face. He tries to speak but it comes out garbled and unintelligible, until eventually, he falls silent. When Will is sure the man is dead, he releases the pressure on the knife and looks over Randall.

The gravity of the situation hits him like a freight train. He's just *killed* someone. This isn't a fantasy or a dream. This is real. The sticky blood on his hands isn't going to disappear.

The adrenaline wears off as quickly as it had come, and he stands, swaying on his feet. He turns, momentarily having forgotten that Hannibal had been there, watching the scene unfold. Nausea settles in his gut as he drops the bloodied knife. He wretches, vomiting on the floor next to Randall's lifeless body.

"Oh god," He rasps after he empties the contents of his stomach.

"I don't know what happened." Will says, looking at Hannibal.

He braces himself for Hannibal's reaction, expecting to be met with disbelief and revulsion. However, he finds only awe in the man's widened pupils and heaving breaths. Every feature in his face seems to be radiating reverence. Before he can consider the implications of Hannibal's expression, the edges of his vision start to blur and darkness creeps into his mind until he collapses like a rag doll onto the ground.

Hannibal

After lifting Will's unconscious form up and placing him on the couch, Hannibal gets to work on cleaning up the mess his house had become. He takes Randall's body down to the basement, putting the corpse in the small meat locker there. He'll deal with it later. Sweeping up the broken glass and scrubbing the floors clean of blood and vomit takes several hours. By the time he's done, the sun is up and he's covered in a sheen of sweat.

He walks toward Will, snapping his fingers in front of the younger man's face. Satisfied with the lack of response, he leaves to shower. He needs to tend to Will and examine him for injuries, but isn't keen on doing anything to the boy while he's unconscious.

After showering, he towels off and dresses quickly, hoping to be back before Will wakes. He hurries down the hallway and sees the couch empty.

"Will?" he calls out in an apprehensive tone. Receiving no response, he looks around frantically, wishing he had kept closer watch. He finally finds Will in the kitchen, standing in front of the stove with a dazed expression on his face.

Hannibal approaches Will slowly, trying to appear non-threatening. He notices the slight tremor in Will's hands and the way his brow is furrowed as if he's in pain.

"Will," He says, gently. "Are you all right?"

Will doesn't say anything in response, he just grips the counter with white knuckles and closes his eyes. Hannibal notices a tear slip down his face and his throat tightens. He steps forward and places a hand on the young man's back.

Will's body tenses beneath his touch, but he doesn't pull away. He just stands there, silently sobbing. Hannibal sighs as he wraps his arms around Will, holding him close. He holds him as his body shakes and he releases the tears he didn't know how to contain.

As the sobs start to subside, Hannibal pulls back, keeping his hands on Will's shoulders.

"I *killed* him." Will says, voice shaky.

"You did. You had no other option." Hannibal replies. "But killing him isn't what you're agonizing over, is it?"

"It felt *good* to kill him. It felt just . " Will admits, suppressing a sob.

"Killing must feel good to God, too. He does it all the time, and are we not created in his image?"

"Depends on who you ask. I was never very religious." Will responds, shaking his head.

Will pushes off the counter on shaky legs, grabbing the glass of water he had clearly gotten up to get himself earlier. Hannibal follows closely behind as he pads back to the couch and sits down with a wince.

"Did you call the police?" Will asks, looking around the room and seeing no evidence of the night before.

"I did not. You killed Randall in self defense, but it's likely the police would not have believed you given your history with him." Hannibal says.

It's not the truth. Randall had broken into Hannibal's house and threatened Will with the knife first. It's a textbook case of self defense. It's possible that, if their prior relationship was discovered, the motive would appear muddied, but any jury would likely rule Will not guilty.

Not calling the police is also selfish. Hannibal doesn't wish to have prying eyes on himself, and he would if the police were invited into his home to treat his living room like a crime scene. His basement is well hidden, and they probably wouldn't find it, but one can never be too cautious.

"Did you... did you *hide* his body?" Will asks disbelievingly.

"Not quite." Hannibal replies.

"Why are you not freaking out?" Will asks, eyes suddenly wide as if he's just realized they're talking about covering up a murder. "And why didn't you tell me Randall was your patient?"

Hannibal takes a deep breath. "There are things you do not know about me, Will."

Will listens intently, waiting for Hannibal's next sentence.

"I also didn't think that Randall posed enough of a threat for me to say anything. I didn't think that he would come here to hurt you or I."

Hannibal knows he's building an intricate framework of lies now. He'd known Randall was dangerous, had even implemented unethical therapy to make him *more* dangerous. He truthfully didn't expect the man to come after him. He'd wanted Randall to go after Will, to help Will see who he truly is. To finally give in to his desires. He'd dreamt of seeing Will covered in Randall's blood, reborn into the predator Hannibal knew he could be. The reality is less picturesque than he'd expected, but he still finds the image of Will bathed in Randall's blood beautiful.

Will nods, his expression sad and understanding. The boy is too trusting. Hannibal sees no doubt in his wide, blue eyes. That might change, given what Hannibal intends to reveal next.

"There's something you must know about me."

"What?"

"I have killed, too. It's a part of me. It's who I am."

Will's face cycles through emotions first shock, then awe, and perhaps even disgust, and Hannibal isn't sure where it's going to land. He's not sure he could deal with anything less than acceptance from the boy. Thankfully, Will's features seem to imply a hesitant acceptance. Though he wonders if that will change once the encephalitis is gone for good.

"Who have you killed?" Will asks.

"Many. It began with my sister's murderers. I hunted them down and killed them one by one. It is where I truly got the... taste for it."

"You don't mince words. Why do you say it's how you got a *taste* for it?"

"Her murderers. They ate her... they forced me to eat her."

“And now you eat *them* , don’t you?” Will asks, though his tone isn’t sharp.

The boy sees through Hannibal completely, in a way he’d begun to think was no longer possible. To be seen like *this* , to be truly seen by the object of his infatuation is nothing short of a religious experience.

Hannibal nods, “Would you like to see?”

Will pauses, as if considering it.

“Yes.” he finally answers.

Hannibal leads him down to the basement, feeling a sense of accomplishment in being able to show the boy who he is. He turns on the light and steps aside, letting Will take in the sight of the the basement. It's clean, sanitary like a morgue might be. All the table in the middle of the room is missing is a body.

“You do this for justice, for vengeance?” he asks.

“Sure,” Hannibal answers. “But it's primarily for pleasure.”

"Where is Randall?"

"Through here," Hannibal says, his hand finding the small of Will's back unconsciously. The boy does not flinch away from his touch, so he keeps his hand there.

Leading him through the door to the small meat locker, he keeps his eyes trained on Will's face as he takes in the scene. Randall is there, hanging from a hook, stripped of his clothing, his neck wound no longer bleeding. The man is *dead* . Aside from a sharp intake of breath, Will says nothing.

"Now what would you do with him? If this were a normal... kill?" Will asks, not tearing his gaze from the lifeless man.

"I'd place him on the table and harvest what I want from his body. He may have been a disgusting human being, but he can be quite *useful* now."

Hannibal almost misses hearing his boy ask to help, still in awe that he hasn't turned away from him and tried to escape. Even if he doesn't know it, Will is in no real danger here. As much as Hannibal believes he would kill Will if it became necessary, the more time he spends with the boy the more he learns that there's no way he would be able to go through with it. He much prefers Will alive. To deprive the world of someone like Will would be a disservice.

Will seems determined to help, but he's weak. Both from the fight with Randall and the encephalitis that has been burning up inside his brain. In the end, Will takes a seat near the work area, and watches intently as Hannibal opens up the body of his attacker. Every so often, Hannibal looks away from his work to see Will, still seated and still enraptured by the process.

Will

Chapter Notes

Writing is hard

See the end of the chapter for more notes

As the weeks pass by, Will begins to wonder if his acceptance of Hannibal's *lifestyle* is actually real. He'd half expected himself to feel more horrified by what the man does, but as the haze of encephalitis clears, the horror never comes. He gets his strength back, and soon has no real reason to be sleeping in Hannibal's guest bedroom.

He has no reason to go back to campus right now, either. He'd withdrawn from all of his classes due to his medical condition and since there will be no penalty on his GPA for the unplanned break, he decides not to worry about it further. He'll go back in the fall and try his hand at school once more. His doctors told him it could be months before he regains all of his cognitive function, but at least his strength is back.

Even with his acceptance of Hannibal, he has thus far refused to eat anything he cooks unless he sees the meat first. It's one thing to be complicit, it's entirely something else to participate. The idea of eating Randall makes him nauseous, even if there's a part of him that wants to experience it with Hannibal.

Jesus Christ, he's going insane, he thinks to himself. No sane person would be okay with this.

Sometimes he wonders if he really loves Hannibal or if the feeling is the result of the intense dependency he's developed on the man. The last boundary he has with Hannibal is his dorm. Keeping his permanent living quarters separate from Hannibal makes him feel like he has his emotions under control.

"I think I should go back to campus," Will says one morning over breakfast.

Hannibal frowns, as if he's revealed some kind of outlandish secret, "You can't, Will. Not until fall classes begin."

"What?" Will asks, baffled.

"When you withdrew. You forfeited your dorm."

It suddenly makes sense why Hannibal insisted on moving all of Will's things into the guest bedroom, because he no longer has anywhere else to go.

Feeling claustrophobic, Will stands and paces the dining room. He tries to calm himself down, but he feels too hot and his clothes feel too tight. There's too much energy thrumming

through his veins just beneath his skin. He rhythmically squeezes his hands, feeling the ends of his fingernails dig into the flesh of each palm. The slight pain does little to calm him. He needs to get outside.

Will leaves the dining room and heads outside. He takes a deep breath, hoping that the fresh air will help to soothe his racing mind. The sun rays feel warm against his skin and he exhales, feeling comforted by nature's presence. The grounds around Hannibal's neighborhood are meticulously manicured with every fountain, tree and bush in its proper place. Everywhere he looks there is beauty and peace.

At last, it feels as if he has room to breathe. He inhales deeply, giving his starving lungs the oxygen they've been screaming for. The peace only lasts for a moment, because Hannibal has followed him. Will listens to the man's footsteps as he gets closer. He doesn't turn around. He feels his face heat up with shame at his reaction. He'd stormed out like a small child.

But he's tired of Hannibal doing things behind his back. First there was Randall, and that he doesn't even know the extent of, then this. He hadn't even thought to tell Will he can't go home?

"Will?" Hannibal calls out to him hesitantly.

"Lies of omission are still lies, Hannibal." Will replies angrily.

"Come back inside, we can discuss this there." Hannibal says.

Will follows him back into the house, his anger still simmering. He doesn't sit down at the table this time and Hannibal watches him carefully as he paces the room.

"I understand why you wouldn't want to tell me before when I was so ill," Will begins, trying to keep his voice from shaking with rage. "But it was important for me to have my own space, and you didn't tell me I'd forfeited that liberty."

"I thought you knew." Hannibal replies.

"Clearly I didn't. Something tells me you don't want me to leave regardless. How do I know you're not lying?"

"You can reach out to the university if you'd like."

"I should and I *shouldn't* trust you anymore." Will replies.

Hannibal doesn't say anything, but he looks uncharacteristically apologetic. Will takes that as a sign of good faith and he lets out a heavy breath. He can stay here for now and figure out his next move once he's composed himself.

"I'll stay." Will says quietly, feeling grateful for the gesture but also wary of Hannibal's motivations. "But I want to be clear about something," he continues, meeting Hannibal's eyes firmly. "You need to tell me when you've made decisions like this one in the future without my knowledge, because I will not tolerate being manipulated."

He knows it's useless to tell Hannibal not to manipulate him. It's clearly an integral part of his *shining* personality. He just has to get better at seeing through it--especially if he's going to live here. The circumstances he's found himself in leaves him feeling like a rabbit stuck in a snare, waiting for the fox to close in.

But he isn't a rabbit. He's a fox, too. There's blood on his hands now, as much as he wishes there wasn't. Any innocence he thought he could claim is gone. Even if Randall was out of control and would have killed him, Will should have resisted. He shouldn't have used deadly force. But he *wanted* to. And that's why he's a predator. He’s more like Hannibal than he wants to admit to himself.

Will realizes he's alone. Hannibal had given him the space he'd wanted just minutes ago. But now, the silence is deafening. Hannibal is the only other person who might be able to understand how he feels, and that connection feels even more important now.

" *Fuck* ," He whispers to himself as he searches the house for Hannibal like a lost puppy.

He finds him exactly where he expected him to be--in his study. There's a large sheet of drawing paper in front of him and Hannibal is sketching something.

A soft gasp leaves Will’s mouth as he views what’s on Hannibal’s paper. It’s a drawing of him, posed like Michelangelo’s David. His eyes follow the curve of his neck into his shoulders and further down, passing over his nipples and sculpted abs. He’s pretty sure he doesn’t actually look like this—it’s way too… *refined* . The only part of the drawing he’s sure looks like he does is the hair. His dark curls fall unkempt onto his forehead in the drawing and he unconsciously pushes his own away.

Further down on the drawing, between the apex of his thighs, lies his cock. Soft and resting within the curls of his pubic hair. The nudity isn’t inherently sexual, and he isn’t offended that Hannibal’s drawn him this way but that doesn’t preclude him from feeling embarrassed. His cheeks heat up and turn a bright red. He looks away, unable to meet Hannibal’s gaze that he’s sure is fixed on his face right now.

Even more concerning is the fact the drawing has made him hard. Again, he reminds himself the nudity in artwork doesn’t have to be sexual, but a small voice in his mind preens at the idea that Hannibal—that anyone—could see him this way. He looks godly. As if he’s fit to be worshipped. It’s a foreign feeling, and once he gets past the embarrassment, it feels good.

Regardless of the shaky footing he and Hannibal have found themselves on, his body seems unbothered. His face reddens as he feels a flush travel from his cheeks down to his chest. He muses what he’d look like in Hannibal’s sketch had it been drawn with more sensual intent, and the thought does little to quell the growing arousal in his lower abdomen.

He tears his gaze from the sketch, realizing Hannibal had been staring at him the entire time. Maroon eyes meet his, the color of Hannibal's irises almost obscured completely by his pupils blown wide with lust. He wants to reach out and touch, to feel Hannibal's flesh beneath his palms. His teeth ache with the desire to sink his teeth into the juncture between Hannibal's neck and collarbone.

No matter how much he yearns for it, Will can't bring himself to take the first step and move toward Hannibal. The intensity of his feelings seem to resonate with the other man, yet Hannibal doesn't budge either. He sees Will as too delicate, almost as if he were made of glass and would shatter if touched without utmost caution.

Will, finally understanding that if this is going to go any further than the occasional longing looks they’re giving each other, has to make the first move. So Will leans forward quickly, his lips meeting Hannibal’s. He groans when he feels Hannibal reciprocate with his hands finding the back of Will’s neck. Intent on soothing the ache in his chest, he decides to reach for the button of Hannibal’s trousers. His mind muddled with arousal, it’s all too easy to forget that not only is Hannibal a monster, Will is too. With those thoughts cast aside, he focuses on the physical sensation of closeness.

Chapter End Notes

When you're angry at your cannibalistic boyfriend and don't know what to do with your emotions, you could just initiate sex with him I guess.

Hannibal

Chapter Notes

Be forewarned this chapter is 2.7k words of smut

“Tell me what you want.” Hannibal says, his lips ghosting just above the flushed skin of Will’s neck.

The boy settles on his lap, his ass pressing down Hannibal’s hardening cock. He squirms against it, eliciting a moan from Hannibal.

Oh, how he wishes to break down the boy in his lap. He fantasizes of leaving him weeping and begging for more. He wants the boy's mind to be only conscious of how desperately he desires Hannibal's caresses. And then, he aches to provide it all - give the boy everything.

“You,” Will gasps, face flushed a flattering shade of pink. It's *almost* enough to make Hannibal ravage the boy. He knows what it means, but he wants to hear Will tell him in more detail.

"I'm afraid I'm going to require a higher degree of specificity than that," Hannibal replies, pulling back to look Will in the eyes.

Will shivers, meeting Hannibal's eyes. He can see the boy deciding how to proceed. His face reddens almost imperceptibly, as if he's little more than a blushing virgin.

"I'd like to have sex with you." Will finally says, clearly deciding to be straightforward with what he wants, even if it doesn't sound particularly *sensual* when described in that way.

"How, my dear boy?" Hannibal presses further.

"Fuck me. I want you inside me."

Hannibal almost asks if he’s sure. But before he can, the boy pulls him forward by the collar of his shirt, crushing their lips together in a desperate kiss. Nothing like the slow, soft thing Hannibal had envisioned for their first time. Will seems like a dying man, grasping for life, as if he’ll find the meaning of it all in Hannibal’s lips.

Perhaps this is all Will knows. Maybe he doesn’t know how to do this in a way that isn’t rushed, *desperate* . Maybe Hannibal needs to show him.

With that thought in mind, Hannibal stands, lifting Will effortlessly, the boy’s thighs closing tightly around his hips.

“What’re you doing?” Will asks, licking his lips.

The inflection of his voice reminds Hannibal of how young the boy is. *Too young* , his brain provides before the thought is forcefully banished, though there is still some innocence shining in the boy’s wet eyes.

Will is an adult, mostly grown and having had more experience in pain and suffering than most of the men Hannibal’s age. If this is what he wants, Hannibal will give it to him.

“I’m taking you to my bed, isn’t that what you want?” Hannibal asks, flashing a smile at Will.

“Mmm, yes,” Will replies, eyes sliding closed.

The boy is relaxed in Hannibal’s arms, as if he’s just moments from sleep. Admittedly, he’d be a little disappointed to find Will asleep instead of ready to be taken apart.

Arriving at their destination, Hannibal places Will on the bed gently.

“You’re treating me like fine china.” Will points out, one brow raised. It’s as if he’s drawing attention to the fact he isn’t fragile–that he’s a killer just like Hannibal is. How can two objectively dangerous people love each other so gently?

“One shouldn’t discount the merits of gentleness. It has its place among savagery.”

“I’m still upset with you,” Will says, though his tone lacks the bite Hannibal expects with such a statement.

“If that’s so, why are you sprawled out on my bed eagerly awaiting my touch?” Hannibal challenges him.

“I’m upset with you because you and I are more alike than I want to admit. I’ve been blinded by the guise of morality.”

“And now that you’re aware of the curtain over your vision?”

“Now I want you to fuck me.” Will says.

Hannibal wastes no more time before slipping off his shoes and crawling over the boy on his bed. He’s *delectable* . Will squirms, his hips caged between Hannibal’s toned thighs.

Pulling Will’s shirt over his head, he sees the flush that has formed on his cheeks has spread all the way down to his pecs. His dusty pink nipples are hard with anticipation, just as his cock surely is. But he’ll get to that in time. He intends to enjoy every part of his Will.

He kisses Will again, his tongue slipping inside the boy’s mouth effortlessly. Will moans into the kiss, his hips instinctively hitching upward. Hannibal feels his cock brush against his thigh, already impossibly hard. Not impossible, he corrects himself. His own cock is in a similar state, trapped within the confines of his pants.

He breaks the kiss, trailing his tongue along Will's jawline, admiring the perfection of the boy's features. He nips at his earlobe, eliciting a gasp from Will, who continues to squirm beneath him. Hannibal knows he's torturing the boy, but one cannot be faulted for torture when it makes the victim gasp and moan like Will currently is beneath him. He is only human, after all.

He bites gently into Will's neck, longing to sink his teeth in just enough to make Will bleed. Just enough to taste him like he's wanted to since they met on that fateful night. He shoves the desire aside, and continues licking and sucking on Will's neck, careful to avoid leaving marks. But the desire to mark Will wins out when he sucks on Will's lower neck hard enough to leave a suck-bruise. The slightly rougher treatment elicits a more desperate moan from Will, inspiring Hannibal to go further.

Will is unabashedly squirming now, his hips canting upward in search of friction. It's clear the boy is over stimulated, drunk with arousal. Unable to form words, only gasps, groans, and moans. Hannibal finds he quite likes the boy this way, though he knows he'd quickly begin to miss the boy's sharp tongue.

When he reaches the juncture of Will's neck and shoulder, using what he's learned from giving Will the suck-bruise, he bites down harder, his canines definitely breaking skin. He tastes the warm copper liquid on his tongue and is so enraptured by it, he almost misses the way Will yowls desperately, a mix of pain and pleasure, and trembles helplessly beneath him.

The culmination of Will's arousal becomes glaringly obvious to Hannibal. The bite had brought the boy to orgasm–if the way he lies bonelessly beneath him says anything. Hannibal glances down between them, seeing a dark spot on the front of Will's pants.

Hannibal turns his attention back to his neck and licks at the small wound, eliciting a whimper from Will.

"I didn't mean to, um," Will tries to say, his voice low with embarrassment.

"I hadn't expected that would be your response, but I am enormously pleased." Hannibal replies, licking his lips for a taste of any remaining blood.

"Pleased? But I," Will starts, "It was too fast."

"Did you think I'd only be making you come once today?" Hannibal asks.

Will blushes a bright red at his words, shifting nervously beneath Hannibal.

"Would you like to stop?"

"No!" Will replies, all too quickly. He bites his lip, his eyes meeting Hannibal's with curiosity shining within them.

"Very well," Hannibal replies, moving quickly to the button of Will's trousers. He opens them, unzips them and pulls them down Will's legs, letting them fall to the ground. He does

the same with Will's boxers, the garments stained with his release and likely becoming uncomfortable against his skin.

Watching the way his boy lies on the bed, practically quivering in excitement, Hannibal wonders how he's been able to maintain control over himself for as long as he has. A nagging memory of that day in Will's dorm stays with him. He'd done the boy a disservice, using him like that. He wonders if the way he's going about it now is some kind of apology to Will. Truthfully, if Will had expressed interest in fucking his throat, he'd have been on his knees for it. *Anything for Will* –even if it goes against who he is as a person or a partner.

He suspects Will would like being subjected to that kind of treatment periodically, but not now, and certainly not *then* . The relationship was too new, and he was still healing. It's hard to reconcile that the *boy* in his bed now is the same *man* who was seething at him earlier. The same man who killed Randall and watched with rapturous eyes as Hannibal worked with the body.

He strokes himself once through his trousers, reminded of how his cock aches for Will. Will's fingers reach up, grasping at the shirt button closest to Hannibal's neck. He loosens the button allowing some of Hannibal's silver chest hair to poke through.

He moves Will's hand away and unbuttons his shirt completely before sliding it off his arms and baring himself from the waist up.

"I like this, you know," Will says, his voice light, almost hazy.

Hannibal groans quietly as the boy's hands run through and tug gently on his chest hair. It had never been something previous lovers had given much thought to, and at one point, Hannibal had almost waxed it. But he didn't. Maybe this is why.

"I'm glad," Hannibal replies, leaning down to press a kiss to Will's lips. The boy smiles against him, his eyes twinkling with pleasure. Hannibal is so glad they found each other. *Hunter and prey* , but the prey isn't helpless at all. He's vicious, *dangerous* , in a way not all that different from the hunter.

Breaking the kiss, he once more slowly begins exploring the boy's body with his hands and mouth, nipping and licking in places that make Will squirm beneath him in pleasure. The boy's short refractory period is impressive, his perfect, pink cock hard and resting against his stomach once more. It's of average size, and curves upward slightly and Hannibal can't help but envision Will inside him. Despite the boy's lack of experience, Hannibal is sure it would be a breathtaking experience. Perhaps better than being inside his boy? He wonders.

But that isn't what Will asked for, and he intends to give Will everything he asks for and more. His thoughts are nothing short of worshipful, and he can't help but wonder when he began to feel this way. How did this boy, who showed up dirty, bleeding, and *broken* , become so important to him?

He asks himself the question, but he already knows. Will sees him, he's *like* him. They're two sides of the same coin, similar in a way Hannibal had believed was impossible. Being reminded he isn't as unique, as *different* as he believed might have bothered him had he been

shown in any other way. But with Will, he's ecstatic to have someone who understands him on a spiritual level, as partner, not an adversary.

He trails kisses along Will's taut stomach, sucking and biting the flesh between his teeth softly. He doesn't draw more blood, even if the last time made will reach orgasm--suddenly and unexpectedly. He reaches Will's inner thighs, passing over the boy's cock to graze his teeth along the sensitive skin there making Will jerk and moan at the sensation.

Will's cock twitches with each press of Hannibal's lips against his thighs, so responsive to all sensation. Coming back up, he sees how the boy has leaked all over himself, his pre-cum forming a puddle on his stomach.

"You're so wet for me," He teases lightly, his finger wiping through the mess. Will nods in turn, seemingly unable to form words.

Hannibal reaches to the side of the bed and procures a bottle of lubricant from the drawer of his nightstand. Will watches intently, tension evident in his shoulders.

"Relax, Will. I don't intend to hurt you." Hannibal murmurs, popping open the cap of the bottle and drizzling some of the lubricant onto his fingers.

With his clean hand, he rubs reassuring circles on Will's hip. His other hand finds his hole, fluttering in anticipation. He prods gently at the tight ring of muscle, relaxing it before he sinks a finger into the first knuckle. Will tenses below him, but relaxes again after a moment passes.

"You're doing so well for me, my boy." Hannibal praises him, making Will blush and look away shyly.

After adding a second finger, he pauses, hearing Will gasp. Though he doesn't seem to be in pain, and he isn't asking Hannibal to stop. Perhaps it's a reaction to the foreign sensation of being penetrated. He slowly pumps his fingers in and out, only stopping once to drizzle more lubricant atop his fingers, when Will moans for the first time.

"How do you feel?" He asks.

"Goo-ah!" Will gasps, his tone changing suddenly when Hannibal presses purposefully against his prostate.

Hannibal watches Will's cock twitch with renewed interest, his erection having flagged slightly when he'd begun fingering him. Unable to resist, Hannibal leans forward and licks the tip of Will's cock, tasting the pre-cum that had beaded there. It's salty and bitter, but *divine* . Will moans, involuntarily hitching his hips upward at the contact.

Hannibal takes the boy in his mouth as he opens him up, adding a third finger. It's an awkward angle but it works, though he's sure he'll feel it in his back tomorrow. He isn't as young as he once was, despite how fit he keeps himself.

He continues like that, stopping the ministrations with his mouth when he feels Will approach orgasm. Looking up at Will, he can see tears forming at the corner of his eyes. Concerned, he stills his fingers.

"Are you alright?"

"Are you trying to kill me?" Will asks--no, *moans* .

"If you come again now, you'll be too sensitive."

"Okay, well, stop..." Will pauses, as if to find the correct word, " *edging* me."

Hannibal chuckles, "My apologies."

It wasn't entirely unintentional, but who could fault him given the way Will looks completely debauched and stuck on the edge of orgasm? He's certain he could watch Will writhe and beg beneath him for *hours* , and then he'd finally let the boy come as he sobs in relief.

He ignores Will's cock and his thoughts as he finishes preparing the boy. And although it's what he more or less asked for, he seems even more jittery than before.

Hannibal removes his trousers and boxers, freeing his own neglected cock. He gives it a few strokes to relieve some of the ache, swiping over the sensitive head to collect the pre-cum there, before taking his now covered thumb and pressing it into Will's hole slowly.

"Please," Will gasps. It's the first time the boy has begged. He's impressed he's held out this long.

He slicks his cock up with lubricant and lines himself up with Will's entrance.

"Tell me if I begin to hurt you. That is not my intention." He reminds Will once more. The boy nods desperately and Hannibal sinks in.

Will gasps, arching his back and whimpering as the discomfort fades away, replaced by the feeling of being filled with Hannibal. He takes a few moments to adjust, tight muscles relaxed as he takes a few deep breaths.

"Okay," He breathes, a choked moan escaping his lips.

"Are you alright?" Hannibal asks, feeling the boy tremble beneath him.

Will meets his gaze and nods before wrapping his legs around Hannibal's waist. He moves cautiously, ensuring that Will is ready for more before he begins thrusting deeper. The sensation of finally being connected to Will is overwhelming, and he lets out a relieved sigh, the ache that had been mounting in him dissipating.

It's slow and gentle at first, gradually increasing in speed and intensity. Hannibal watches Will's face, eyes fluttering and his cheeks flushing a deep shade of pink. His breathing is ragged, as if he can hardly get enough air, and Hannibal can't help but smile at the sight--his boy taken and overwhelmed with pleasure.

Hannibal takes Will's cock in hand, stroking him in time with their thrusts as he feels himself begin to lose control. He drives himself deeper, faster, and Will's moans get higher and higher with each thrust, until he's completely overcome, trembling beneath Hannibal and crying out in pleasure.

Hannibal watches as he reaches his peak, the boy's climax wracking his body in pleasure before finally sagging beneath him exhausted.

The sight is enough to bring Hannibal over the edge, too. He comes inside his boy with a soft groan. He collapses atop Will, panting and exhausted, pleased to see the boy glowing with satisfaction.

Will

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Will Graham hisses at the sting of the alcohol pad on the bite wound on his shoulder. Receiving it had been akin to a religious experience, but now it just *aches* . He sits quietly afterward as Hannibal places a bandage over the wound, lost in thought. He hasn't spoken a word since they'd had sex, the feelings inside his head too much to try and sift through to form any meaningful words.

He doesn't regret sleeping with Hannibal–even if he knows he should. They'd been fighting just beforehand and while he isn't well versed in these matters, he muses that sex might not be the best way to reconcile. But how can one really reconcile a relationship like theirs? After this, after the way he's been changed, there's no way he could just leave Hannibal. It feels like they're intertwined, like neither of them could survive separation, despite how bad they may be for one another.

Hannibal sits behind him on the bed, Will leaning backwards into his solid chest. He breathes, in and out. Focusing on the way the air feels passing through his nose and out through his mouth. He isn't going to hurdle himself into a panic attack. Not now, not after *this* . Despite their rocky relationship, this had been good. Better than good. It was more than he'd ever expected from sex.

"I'd like to take a shower," He finally says, his voice flat.

"The bandage on your shoulder is waterproof, so that shouldn't be an issue." Hannibal replies.

Will turns to look at the older man. He can tell Hannibal wants to talk, wants to know why he's being suddenly unforthcoming. He swallows thickly. Will doesn't want to tell him the truth.

He feels gross. *Dirty* . The feeling is exacerbated whenever he moves and feels the dull ache in his ass. Hannibal had been gentle and had prepared him remarkably well, but even the best preparation can't make it an entirely pain free experience. It's different than the way he felt after his attack, obviously. But pain is pain to his lizard brain.

Hannibal places a gentle kiss on Will's neck just below his ear, making the boy shudder at the contact. Awareness of how hard his heart is beating spurs him into action, and he all but rips himself away from Hannibal's body.

He moves to stand, but stumbles once he's on his feet. His head feels full of cotton and his legs are like jello. Despite the way he's tensed up because of his unsavory thoughts, he still feels tendrils of pleasure throughout his limbs. His body is sated, even if his mind isn't.

Hannibal is there to steady him, of course. He reluctantly takes the man's outstretched arm while insisting he's fine. They walk into the bathroom together, then Hannibal sits Will down

on the closed toilet lid.

"I think a bath might be a wiser choice right now." Hannibal says, pausing as if Will is going to argue.

Will just nods, biting back the question of whether or not Hannibal is going to join him. It's a large, clawfoot tub and they're both already naked. Will isn't going to protest if the man slides in behind him. He likes Hannibal's touch, his attention. He isn't sure why he's associating this with his assault. The two events are vastly different. Hannibal's touch isn't like theirs, he'd made Will feel better than anything he could have imagined.

He feels guilty for going practically non-verbal. It isn't helpful, but it's something he's done since he was a child whenever he finds himself in an emotionally taxing situation. He knows he isn't going to feel any better until he talks about it.

When the water is run, Hannibal helps Will into the tub, then slides in behind him. Exactly how Will had imagined he would. The warmth of the water is enough to relieve some of the tension in his shoulders and he relaxes into Hannibal's chest. This is the kind of intimacy Will craves, nothing like the crude physicality of his attack, but something else. Something that goes beyond the physical.

Will turns to look at Hannibal, the light above the bathroom mirror illuminating the man's face. He reaches up and strokes the man's cheek, his blue eyes searching the depths of Hannibal's brown.

"Are you alright, Will?" Hannibal asks, his voice low and concerned.

Will nods, but it's not enough. He takes a deep breath, knowing he needs to say what's on his mind, but scared to open up. He takes a few more tremulous breaths before finally meeting Hannibal's gaze.

"I… I'm sorry. This just reminded me of my attack," He says, biting his lip, his voice strained with emotion. Hannibal stills for a moment, concern radiating from his expression. "I know there's no comparison. This was an act of love, and the other was not, but my attempts at rationalization have been unsuccessful."

Hannibal nods, and Will leans into Hannibal's embrace.

"I was fine during, better than fine. You made me feel so... *good* . I've never come like that in my life." Will says, worrying that he's babbling now. "And then afterward, the minuscule pain left behind from the act, it reminded me of the pain from before."

The words don't feel like they've accurately conveyed how he feels, but it will have to do.

"Let me take care of you," Hannibal continues, his voice soft and gentle.

He rubs his hands lightly over Will's body, caressing every inch with tenderness and love. The combination of his words and touch works to ease away all of Will's worries as he

relaxes further into the water. The heat soothes his anxiety and exhaustion fades away as Hannibal begins to lather shampoo into his hair.

Hannibal's large hands feel glorious in Will's hair. He suppresses a moan when he starts massaging his scalp. If he were less in his head at the moment, the tender touches might have elicited arousal, but they don't. Negative thoughts aside, he feels wrung dry. He's not sure he could get hard again right now even if he wanted to. He laughs softly to himself at the thought.

"Feeling better?" Hannibal asks, having not missed his laugh.

"A bit. Keep doing that." Will orders.

Biting his lip, he realizes he's just demanded Hannibal do something. It surprises him, given that he's never done that before. It feels… *wrong* somehow. And yet, Hannibal doesn't seem to have noticed. Will's words weren't some monumental thing to him. He isn't sure why he's stuck on the notion, to be honest. They're in a relationship… *right?*

He hadn't spent much time considering the semantics of their relationship. He'd just assumed they were together. But it feels more intense than what he thinks a romantic relationship would be like. Theirs is all-consuming, codependent. Probably not healthy… *definitely* not healthy.

He could stay in this bathtub with Hannibal for the rest of his life, but unfortunately the water is cooling and his skin is becoming pruny. He's as clean as he's going to get, so he turns to face Hannibal. He's attractive like this. His hair mussed up, his bangs falling over his forehead. He lacks the perfection he often displays. But seeing him like this is perfect in its own way. Will wonders how many others have seen him like this.

Leaning forward, Will kisses him. It's chaste, and not meant to go anywhere or stir arousal in either of them, but that doesn't stop his cock from giving an interested twitch. *Fuck* , he thinks. He's so helplessly in love with this monster. So in love that he doesn't even care that he's become a monster too.

"I love you." Will says, eyes fixed on Hannibal's. He says the words like they're the most important sounds he's ever uttered.

"And I love you, dear boy." Hannibal replies, stroking Will's cheek.

They drain the water from the tub and get out after that. Will feels like a weight has been lifted off his chest. He's pretty sure he's loved Hannibal for a long time, but to actually say it to him, out loud, is something else. Equally as monumental, is the confirmation Hannibal feels the same. He'd wondered if the man was capable of love, but he knows now that he is. While Hannibal's love might look different, it's all Will needs…

Or maybe that's just the emotions talking. He's still a mess on the inside from the sex and the breakdown that had followed after. His brain is likely still being bathed in oxytocin. It's hard to think rationally in this state, but even knowing that he can't find it in himself to regret a moment of their day together.

Chapter End Notes

Does anyone read first person POV fics? I have another Hannigram WIP not yet posted because I've convinced myself nobody would read it.

Chapter 27

Chapter Notes

> I'm very sorry for the delay! I've been sick/dealing with health stuff but I have returned... with an admittedly short chapter but it's something! Getting back into the swing of things and hope to return to regular updates.

“You’ve already bought me enough, Hannibal.” Will sighs, exasperated.

“I haven’t purchased a suit for you, though.” Hannibal points out.

He hadn’t. But until now, it wasn’t really needed. Will’s birthday is quickly approaching and he wants to take his boy out. His first thought was to go to the Opera, but something tells him it wouldn’t be well received by someone like Will. So instead, he’ll settle on a date to a nice restaurant. Likely nicer than anything Will’s ever seen.

They don’t venture out together often, and when they do they don’t really look like a couple. If anything, people probably mistake them for father and son. He cringes internally at the idea. Of course, he is at times paternal to Will, but that is born of necessity. He’s much older than the boy and considering the lack of parental figures in his life, Hannibal occasionally has to fill in the gaps.

Nonetheless, he can’t deny the feeling of satisfaction he gets from showing Will the finer things in life. He deserves it, and to be able to share these firsts with the boy is more pleasant than he’d anticipated. But what Will doesn’t like is shopping. If his exasperated sighs and complaints are anything to go by. The boy thinks *everything* is too expensive.

Despite his complaints, Will follows him obediently to his tailor’s shop. It’s an older building in the historic sector of Baltimore. Hannibal parks them a couple of blocks away, and steals glances toward Will as they walk to the shop. He doesn’t say much, but it’s obvious the boy is nervous.

Once inside, they are greeted by a tailor wearing a well-fitted gray suit.

“I’d like to get Will measured for a custom suit,” Hannibal says, after they exchange pleasantries.

“What kind of fabric are you thinking of?” The tailor, George, asks.

“Will?” Hannibal asks, turning to the boy next to him.

“I–what?” He replies with a confused look on his face.

George smiles knowingly, “We have some samples you can look through. I’ll get them for you.”

Will nods his head in thanks.

As George leaves to collect the samples, Hannibal takes the opportunity to admire Will's body. Dressed in a simple black t-shirt and worn jeans, he's far from the elegant and sophisticated image Hannibal wants to present to the world, and yet he's still perfect as he is. But the thought of seeing him in a custom suit, tailored to fit every curve and line of his body, ignites a heat in Hannibal's stomach.

"You'll look so stunning in a suit, Will," he murmurs, softly enough that only Will can hear him.

Will flushes, ducking his head. Hannibal can't resist the urge to run a hand through his hair, pleased when Will leans into the touch. Unbidden, he imagines a tryst in the changing room with his boy. It isn't practical, and he would never indulge such a fantasy, but it has presented himself in detail inside his mind.

Thankfully, George returns then with a rack of fabric samples, laying them out on the table in front of them. Will looks overwhelmed and Hannibal can't blame him. There are a lot of choices and Hannibal wants to make sure they pick the perfect one.

"What do you think, Will?" he asks, picking up a deep navy blue.

Will shrugs, "I don't know. They all look good to me."

Hannibal hums, considering. He wants something that will complement Will's coloring, without being too flashy. He picks up a dark blue wool and holds it up to Will's face.

"This one," he decides. "It'll make your eyes stand out."

Will takes the fabric between two fingers, examining it closely. "It's nice. Classic."

"Exactly. You'll look beautiful, Will."

Will huffs out a laugh, but nods. Hannibal suspects the next portion of getting a custom suit will be Will's least favorite. The tailor instructs Will to stand in front of the mirror as he gathers his measurement supplies. Hannibal watches as he shifts nervously, holding his arms close to his body and knows he's anxious. Will chews on his bottom lip as he waits for the tailor's return.

"We really don't have to do this." Will says, turning to Hannibal. "I can just buy a suit from the store."

"Blasphemy. You need this suit for what I have planned for your birthday." Hannibal responds.

"My birthday?"

"Yes, your birthday. Did you believe I would forget?"

"I never told you when my birthday was." Will replies with a confused smile.

The tailor comes back with a dress shirt and slacks. He looks over Will, and seems to decide he needs the change of clothes to aid in the measurement process.

"Please, change into these and come back out when you're ready." He instructs.

Hannibal watches Will slip into the changing room, then turns back to the fabric samples and surveys them once again, admiring the different colors and textures. It's not often he gets to pick something so personal out for someone he cares about, and it brings him a sense of joy. He can't wait to see Will in his new suit. And in the future, perhaps Will will have a closet of suits as he does.

Once Will is dressed and George begins to measure him, Will is soon clearly trying his damndest not to react to the touches. George's hands slide along the planes of his body as he places the measuring tape in different areas, collecting each measurement. Will's body is tense, he's standing ramrod straight and there are visible, but slight, tremors wracking his body. Despite the obvious discomfort, Will has not uttered a single word.

"Will, you need to relax or the measurements will be incorrect," Hannibal urges gently.

"I'm *trying* ," Will replies through gritted teeth.

Will doesn't like to be touched. It's obvious in his day-to-day life. He avoids it wherever he can, and he certainly doesn't subject himself to processes like this. He's doing this simply because Hannibal had asked it of him.

The knowledge fills Hannibal with a sense of possessiveness. He wants to be the only one who can touch Will, to make him feel comfortable and safe. It's an odd feeling that he can't quite name, but he knows that he won't be able to shake it off any time soon.

As the measuring process comes to an end, George takes a step back and begins to jot down the numbers on a pad. "All done," he announces brightly, "Now we just have to wait for the suit to be made."

Hannibal nods in satisfaction. He can already picture Will in the suit, walking alongside him at a myriad of events, drawing envious glances from everyone in the room. The thought makes him feel proud, but it also awakens a need in him that he can't ignore.

"Thank you, George. We'll wait to hear from you," Hannibal says, flashing him a charming smile.

Once Will changes back into his street clothes they exit the shop. Will looks visibly relieved to be out of there. Hannibal finds himself aroused at his thoughts of Will, dressed in his suit, linked arm in arm with him. He hadn't thought there was anything that would make the boy more irresistible than he already is, but here he is, proved wrong once more when it comes to Will Graham.

Once they're back in the car, he can't resist reaching over and placing a hand on Will's thigh. Will jumps at the unexpected touch, but Hannibal can see his body instantly relax under his hand. His hand strokes the length of Will's thigh, coming close to the apex of the boy's thighs. He aches to touch Will's cock, which is clearly already half-hard from the contact alone. It's an intoxicating feeling, and he can't help but lean in closer to Will, whispering in his ear.

"You were so good in there, Will. I'm proud of you." He says, his hot breath hitting the shell of Will's ear.

His words aren't sensual in nature, but he sees Will shudder nonetheless. When Will's eyes meet his, he sees the arousal in the boy's blown pupils. His cheeks are dusted with a faint blush and he looks exquisite. Will's mouth falls open as he licks his lips and leans in to kiss Hannibal.

It goes right to Hannibal's cock when Will moans into their kiss and shifts in his seat, palming his erection. He wants to pounce on him here, in the car. But they're still parked on the side of a busy Baltimore street and neither of them are particularly keen on being arrested for public indecency.

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